

SUPPLEMENTS TO  
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE



The Constancy and Development  
in the Christology  
of Theodoret of Cyrrhus



VASILIJ VRANIC

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BRILL

## The Constancy and Development in the Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus

# Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae

TEXTS AND STUDIES OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND LANGUAGE

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# The Constancy and Development in the Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus

*By*

Vasilije Vranic



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*To the memory of my late father protopresbyter Perisa Vranic  
who instilled in me the love for theology.*





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*Vasilije Vranic*

# Abbreviations

ACO	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, ed. E. Schwartz
Cavallera	Cavallera, Ferdinandus. S. Eustathii, episcopi Antiocheni In Lazarum, Mariam et Martham homilia christologica. Nunc primum e codice Geonoviano edita cum commentario de fragmentis eustathianis. Accesserunt fragmenta Flaviani 1 Antiocheni.
CPG	Geerard, Maurice. Clavis patrum graecorum.
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Vienna.
Diekamp	Diekamp, Franz. "Gelasius von Caesarea in Palestina." In <i>Analecta Patristica. Texte und Abhandlungen zur griechischen Patristik.</i>
DTC	Dictionnaire de théologie catholique
Funk	Funk, Franz Xavier von. <i>Patres apostolici. Textum recensuit, adnotationibus criticis exegeticis historicis illustravit, versionem latinam prolegomena indices addidit. Vol. 1</i>
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies (new series)
MSR	Mélanges de science religieuse, Lille.
NPNF <sup>2</sup>	Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers (second series)
Otto	Otto, Johann Karl Theodor von, ed. <i>Iustini philosophi et martyris opera quae feruntur omnia. Vol. III. pars I, Corpus apologetarum christianorum saeculi secundi.</i>
PG	Patrologia Graeca, ed. J.P. Migne.
PL	Patrologia Latina, ed. J.P. Migne.
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SP	Studia Patristica
ST	Studi e Testi
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur.
TZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
VC	Vigiliae Christianae



# Introduction

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Theodoret of Cyrrhus played an important role in the fifth-century Christological controversies. It is a widely acknowledged fact that he was the champion of the Antiochene Christological school of thought in both controversies of that century. In fact, he was the only serious opponent to the genius that was Cyril of Alexandria, whose name later became permanently associated with Christological orthodoxy. Theodoret's opposition to Cyril was the main reason for the doubts that were cast on Theodoret's Christology, which allegedly promulgated a radical division of the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ. However, his Christology was sanctioned by an ecumenical council, the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451. Yet about a century later, another ecumenical council (the Second Council of Constantinople in AD 553) condemned his writings against Cyril of Alexandria as tending to express Nestorian ideas, and this suspicion of Nestorianism has continued for many centuries, even to this day.

Today, however, the majority opinion is that Theodoret's mature Christology as expressed in his *Eranistes* is devoid of Nestorianism. Nonetheless, there is considerable scholarly debate as to whether he substantially changed his original Christological teaching from before the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy. There are scholars who argue for a complete change in his Christology, which was supposedly Nestorian before the debates with Cyril commenced, claiming that in the course of the debate Theodoret realized the problems with his position and changed it. Others would argue that Theodoret changed or developed only his terminology, while his actual teaching remained the same.

Patristic scholarship was fortunate to receive another tool with which to assess Theodoret's early Christological thought when J. Lebon restored authorship of the *Expositio rectae fidei* to him, and M. Richard and M. Brok dated the work conclusively to the period preceding the Nestorian controversy. This work contains substantial Christological material which must be taken into consideration when passing judgment on the problem of the alleged development of Theodoret's Christology. Yet none of the analyses of Theodoret's Christology to date have seriously taken into account his early Christological thought as expressed in the *Expositio*. The vast majority of studies begin their consideration with his response to Cyril's *Twelve Anathemas*.



When compared to the more mature Christology as expressed in the *Eranistes* (written c. AD 447), the *Expositio rectae fidei* is rudimentary in terms of the clarity and systematization of its teaching, but, it still offers ample insight into Theodoret's early Christology, and yet no comprehensive study of it exists at present. Moreover, there is no extant translation of the work in any modern language, although J.K.T. von Otto furnished us with a critical edition of the text over a century ago.

In this book, I intend to analyze Theodoret's Christological language and concepts by placing them in their historical context. I will analyze two periods of his theological output: the early period, as represented in the earliest known writing which contains substantive Christological material—the *Expositio rectae fidei*—, and the mature period, as represented in his latest Christological work—the *Eranistes*—, which reveals his mature Christological thought seasoned by years of debate with Cyril of Alexandria and his followers. Furthermore, the study of Theodoret's *Expositio* will be supplemented with a brief discussion of his *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas*, in order to offer a more comprehensive account of his early Christology. The purpose of these analyses will be to consider whether Theodoret's Christology underwent development by comparing the two ends of the chronological spectrum of his literary activity, the periods before the Nestorian controversy and at the dawn of Chalcedon. The conclusions reached in the study of the early period will be tested through a comparison with the Christology of the *Eranistes*, in which possible changes in theological concepts and terminology will be sought.

I hope to prove that Theodoret's Christology did not undergo substantive development in the strict sense of the word. The Christological tenets professed in the early writings are consistently present in his theology throughout his life.

## 1.2 Present Status of the Problem

Scholarly opinion is divided on the question of whether Theodoret's Christology underwent any development.<sup>1</sup> Many scholars who have considered his overall

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1 For a more complete list of scholars who have worked on Theodoret of Cyrrhus in the past two centuries see Joseph Montalverne, *Theodoretī Cyrensis doctrina antiquior de verbo "inhumanato" (a. circiter 423–435)* (Roma: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1948). xvii–xviii.; Marijan Mandac, "L'Union christologique dans les oeuvres de Théodore antérieurs au concile d'Éphèse," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 47 (1971): 64–96.; Jerry Leo Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*" (PhD Dissertation,

theological opus have been primarily concerned with the charge of Christological inadequacy in Theodoret brought by the Council of Constantinople (553). They have analyzed his Christology *vis-à-vis* Nestorianism and have not found anything wrong with it; indeed many of the analyses reflected positively on Theodoret. As early as the sixteenth century, disputing the conventional view that Theodoret was a Nestorian, Tillemont advanced an important and influential argument for Theodoret's orthodoxy, saying that he did not dissent from the faith of the Church in anything.<sup>2</sup> Such an overwhelmingly positive assessment was not repeated for almost three hundred years, until G. Bardy and J. Liébaert studied Theodoret's Christological terminology and phraseology, and drew the conclusion that he was entirely orthodox.<sup>3</sup> Without offering an assessment of Theodoret's doctrinal work, P. Canivet accepted that he was orthodox at the time of the Council of Chalcedon.<sup>4</sup> R. Seeberg offered a similar opinion, stating without further qualification that Theodoret was a man of unquestionable orthodoxy.<sup>5</sup> H.-G. Opitz argued that Theodoret was orthodox, but only because he abandoned the divisive Antiochene Christology, most notably that of Theodore and Nestorius.<sup>6</sup> G. Prestige, argued, however, that Antiochene Christology as a whole with its insistence on the fullness of Christ's humanity in the incarnate Logos was not at stake in the Christological controversies. Certain peculiarities of the Christology of Theodore and Nestorius were problematic, but, Prestige argued, the teachings of both Chrysostom

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Northwestern University, 1972), 346–65.; Paul B. Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*, ed. G. Clark and A. Louth, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 33–52.

- 2 See Adolfus Bertram, *Theodoretī episcopi cyrensis, Doctrina christologica* (Hildesiae: Fr. Borgmeyer, 1883), 11–18, esp. 14.
- 3 Gustave Bardy, "Théodoret," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, ed. Alfred Vacant and Eugène Mangenot (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, Éditeurs, 1946), 320–21.; Jacques Liébaert, *Christologie. Von apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalkedon*, ed. Michael Schmaus and Alois Grillmeier, vol. 111, Faszikel 1a, Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 1965), 114.
- 4 Pierre Canivet, *Histoire d'une entreprise apologétique au V<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1953), 343.
- 5 Reinhold Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte. Die Dogmenbildung der alten Kirche*, vol. 2 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965), 243.
- 6 Hans-Georg Opitz, "Theodoretos von Kyros," in *Paulys Realencyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. Georg Wissowa, W. Kroll, and K. Mittelhaus (Stuttgart 1934), col. 1794.; cf. Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, ed. E.T. Speirs and J.T. Millar, vol. 4, Theological Translation Library, no. 9 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1898), 166, note 1.

and Theodoret were beyond reproach.<sup>7</sup> However, J.N.D. Kelly argued that Theodoret's Christology, though not heretical, was utterly inadequate, because it rejected the *Communicatio idiomatum* of the divine and human natures united in Christ. Moreover, he did not develop clearly the idea that the subsistence (ὑπόστασις) of the Logos was the subject of attributions of the properties of the united natures. Yet he granted that Theodoret was not a Nestorian.<sup>8</sup> Further, R. Sellers was well predisposed toward Theodoret's Christology, characterizing it as fundamentally orthodox, which, as P. Clayton noted, stems from his positive attitude towards Antiochene Christology as a whole.<sup>9</sup> Finally, J.-N. Guinot, in his impressive array of articles on Theodoret's theology, argued that it remained within the framework of the Antiochene Christology and that he remained orthodox throughout his theological output. As a result of his exegetical work of the Bible, Theodoret maintained a union of the divine and human natures in Christ that fully preserved attributes of each, without commingling or confusion. Yet, Guinot seems to suggest that certain theological development is evident in Theodoret's Christology; namely, the *Communicatio idiomatum* of the two natures is evident in his Christology fairly late—in the *Questions on the Octateuch*, which was written following the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451).<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, there are scholars who argue that Theodoret was an outright Nestorian. For example, J. Garnier believed that Theodoret remained a staunch theological ally of Nestorius throughout his career.<sup>11</sup> A. Bertram, who

7 George L. Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics*, Bampton Lectures (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1970). 133, 143, 150–55.

8 John N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th revised ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1977). 323–32, 338–39.

9 Robert V. Sellers, *Two Ancient Christologies* (London: SPCK, 1940). 242.; Robert V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey* (London: SPCK, 1953). 329.; cf. Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 37.

10 Jean-Noël Guinot, “La christologie de Théodoret de Cyr: Essai de bilan illustré par un florilège de textes,” in *Théodoret de Cyr exégèse et théologien* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2012), 522. See also Jean-Noël Guinot, “Doit-on glorifier le Christ ou le Fils monogène? La défense par Théodoret de Cyr d’une doxologie incriminée (Ep. 147),” in *Théodoret de Cyr exégèse et théologien* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2012), 419.; Guinot, “L’exégèse du bouc émissaire (Lévitique 16) chez Cyrille d’Alexandrie et Théodoret de Cyr,” 279.; Guinot, “Théodoret de Cyr et le signe du Temple (Jn 2, 19): Dans le débat christologique de son temps,” 431–68.

11 Garnier, J., *Dissertatio III. de fide Theodreti cyrensis episcopi*. PG 84. 409C–411B.

did not have access to the *Expositio*, argued that Theodoret abandoned his initial Nestorianism and that he was free of heresy at the time of Chalcedon. According to him, the change happened over a long period of time, beginning in AD 433 (the reconciliation of John of Antioch and Cyril of Alexandria) and ending sometime before AD 451.<sup>12</sup> N. Glubokovskii ignored Bertram's proposal and responded to Garnier in his two-volume thesis in which he analyzed the entire Theodoretan opus in its historical context. Glubokovskii's argument exonerates Theodoret's Christology of any charge of heresy. He admits that Theodoret's concept of the Incarnation leaves much to be desired.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, Glubokovskii sees in his Christology a major contribution on the path to Chalcedon.<sup>14</sup> V. Bolotov, in a response to Glubokovskii, praised his systematic study and the quality of his argument. Yet he seemed somewhat hesitant to subscribe to it fully.<sup>15</sup> Disappointingly, A. von Harnack, writing some eight years after Glubokovskii, took no notice of his arguments and proclaimed that it would be difficult for a Catholic to accept Theodoret's Christology.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, O. Bardenhewer argues that Theodoret's Christology was originally Nestorian, but that it shows signs of improvement at the time of composition of the *Eranistes*. Bardenhewer's argument posits that the change happened late in Theodoret's life, for it was not evident during the debate with Cyril, while the Christology of the *Eranistes* (written in AD 447) was orthodox.<sup>17</sup> A. Seider slightly modified Bertram's proposal, arguing that Theodoret changed his position in AD 433, but that certain Nestorian tendencies can be detected

12 Bertram, *Theodoreti episcopi cyrensis, Doctrina christologica*. 93.

13 Nikolai Glubokovskii, *Blazhennyi Theodorit' Episkop' Kirrskii: Ego zhizn' i literaturnaia deiatel'nost'*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1890), 62–63. (Николай Глубоковский, *Блаженный Θεοδορίτς Επισκοπὸς Κιρρσκήϊ: Εго жизнь и литературная дѣятельность*, vol. 1 (Москва: Университетская Типографія, 1890). 62–63.)

14 Ibid., 73ff. and 508–10.

15 Vasilii Bolotov, *Theodoreiana: Otzyv' ob' udostoennom' Sv. Sinodom' polnoi premii mitropolita Makarii v'' 1892g. sochinenii N.N. Glubokovskago: «Blazhennyi Theodorit, Ego zhizn' i literaturnaia deiatel'nost'»* (St. Petersburg: Tipografia A. Katanskago i Ko., 1892), 60–63. (Василий Болотовъ, *Theodoreiana: Отзивъ объ удостоенномъ Св. Синодомъ полной преміи митрополита Макарія въ 1892 г. сочиненіи Н. Н. Глубоковскаго: "Блаженный Θεοδορίт, Εго жизнь и литературная дѣятельность* (С-Петербургъ: Типографія А. Катанскаго и Ко., 1892). 60–63.)

16 von Harnack, *History of Dogma*. 198.

17 Otto Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, vol. 4 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1924; repr., Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008). 223.

in his Christology until the Council of Chalcedon, when he finally completed his conversion to orthodoxy.<sup>18</sup>

M. Richard's seminal study inaugurated a new approach to studying Theodoret's Christology. His overall argument is that there was a change in Theodoret's Christology of which he was not aware. Richard then studied Theodoret's terminology and phraseology, especially his references to Christ as ἄνθρωπος.<sup>19</sup> He argued that Theodoret's language for the concrete reality of the two natures united in Christ changed substantially soon after the reconciliation with John of Antioch and Cyril of Alexandria, and certainly before AD 437. His argument was based on an analysis of the theological language of Theodoret's *On Providence* (most notably Discourse 10).<sup>20</sup> He concludes that Theodoret referred to Christ's human nature in concrete terms only before AD 432, whereas in the works following the *Tomos of Reunion* in AD 433 and the theological debate with Cyril of Alexandria those expressions cannot be found. Richard was aware of one exception: Theodoret's *In Defense of Diodore and Theodore*, written in AD 438 in response to Cyril's attack on the two masters of the Antiochene tradition.<sup>21</sup> Richard correctly concluded that the change in Theodoret's Christology is evident only in his terminology and style, while there was no substantial change in his teaching. Yet, he was convinced that Theodoret's teaching and terminology reflected a duality of subjects in Christ.<sup>22</sup> Richard appears to suggest that the change in Theodoret's Christological discourse was a mere lexical improvement that served to deflect outright accusations of a duality of subjects in Christ. Unaffected by Richard's study, K. Jüssen followed Bertram, but concluded that Theodoret was orthodox roughly at the time of Cyril's death.<sup>23</sup>

Interestingly, although keenly aware of the increasingly benevolent scholarly views of Theodoret's Christology, J. Montalverne followed Garnier in declaring

18 Andreas Seider, "Allgemeine Einleitung zu Theodoret von Cyrus," in *Kirchengeschichte. Aus dem griechischen übersetzt und mit Einleitung und Anmerkungen versehen von Dr. Andreas Seider* (München: Verlag der Jos. Kosel & Fried. Pustet, 1926), lxxii.

19 Marcel Richard, "Notes sur l'évolution doctrinale de Théodoret," *Revue de sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 25 (1936): 459–60.

20 Ibid., 459. Cf. ET of Discourse 10 in Theodoret of Cyrus, *On Divine Providence*, trans. T.P. Halton, *Ancient Christian Writers*, Vol. 49 (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Newman Press, 1988), 135–54.

21 Richard, "Notes sur l'évolution doctrinale de Théodoret," 469–70.

22 Ibid., 475–77.

23 Klaudius Jüssen, "Die Christologie des Theodoret von Cyrus nach seinem neuveröffentlichten Isaiaskommentar," *Theologie und Glaube* 27 (1935): 451–52.

Theodoret an outright Nestorian.<sup>24</sup> In his assessment of the early theology, J. Montalverne proposed that in AD 433 Theodoret made peace with Cyril because he was convinced that it was Cyril who had modified his Christology. Montalverne argued that Theodoret misunderstood Cyril and the Council of Ephesus, which led to the rightful condemnation of his works against Cyril only at the Council of Constantinople in AD 553.<sup>25</sup> This thesis, however, does not take into account the mature Christology as evidenced in the *Eranistes*, limiting itself to an assessment of the Christological debates before AD 435.

C. Mazzarino has argued that Theodoret's Christology did undergo a development: from Nestorian inadequacy it matured into the acceptance of "hypostatic union of the two natures," becoming thus fully orthodox.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, H. Diepen argued that at the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy he was indeed Nestorian, but through the debates with Cyril of Alexandria he gradually converted to orthodoxy.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, P.-T. Camelot detected a "major development" in Theodoret's Christology, without clearly specifying its nature.<sup>28</sup> Given that Camelot held Theodoret to be a Nestorian, the change would presumably be a move toward orthodoxy. A. Grillmeier *de facto* charged Theodoret with Nestorianism. He argued that Theodoret's Christology was "too symmetrical," implying that his conception of the union of natures in Christ was inadequate and that he posited dual subjects of Incarnation. However, Grillmeier likewise believed that Theodoret eventually became orthodox through strengthening his understanding of the union of natures, which he thinks is evident from Letters 145 and 146.<sup>29</sup>

K. McNamara retained a very guarded approach to Theodoret's Christology. He partially followed Richard's argument, pointing out that Theodoret's thought underwent "a certain development which removed him some degrees further from the most dangerous positions adopted by Theodore and Nestorius

24 Montalverne, *Theodoret's Cyrensis doctrina antiquior de verbo "inhumanato"* (a. circiter 423–435). xv–xvi.

25 Ibid., 192–94.

26 Constantino da Mazzarino, *La dottrina di Teodoro di Ciro sull'unione ipostatica delle due nature in Cristo* (Roma: Libreria Pontificia Federico Pustet, 1941). 169–70, 173–75 and 179.

27 Herman M. Diepen, *Les Trois Chapitres au Concile de Chalcédoine: une étude de l'Anatolie ancienne* (Oosterhout: Editions de Saint Michel, 1953). 42.; Cf. Herman M. Diepen, "L'Assumptus Homo à Chalcédoine," *Revue thomiste* 51 (1951): 589–603.

28 Pierre-Thomas Camelot, *Ephesus und Chalcedon*, ed. Gervais Dumeige and Heinrich Bacht, vol. 2, *Geschichte der ökumenischen Konzilien* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1963). 95–96.

29 Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, vol. 1 (London and Oxford: Mowbrays, 1975). 493ff.

[i.e., Nestorianism].”<sup>30</sup> Yet he was not convinced that Theodoret managed to dissociate himself fully from the Nestorian doctrines.<sup>31</sup> In his unpublished dissertation on the Christology of the *Eranistes*, J. Stewardson follows enthusiastically M. Richard’s argument that Theodoret abandoned the Antiochene strong emphasis on Christ’s humanity as reflected in the term ἀνθρώπος.<sup>32</sup> It is interesting to note that he is aware of the emphasis on the human nature of Christ in the patristic florilegia appended to the *Eranistes* (AD 447), which he mentions in a footnote.<sup>33</sup> It seems, however, that the importance of this fact escaped his attention, since he goes on to propound Richard’s argument for change in Theodoret’s Christological framework.

F. Young made an especially interesting proposal. She argued that Theodoret’s Christology underwent no fundamental change, only a terminological one. Theodoret’s Christological thought was concerned with three issues: the basic distinction between the Creator and the created, the insistence that the Logos remains what he is in spite of the Incarnation, and the assumption that the Logos is the personal subject of the act of Incarnation, although all Christ’s human experiences were attributed solely to his human nature.<sup>34</sup> In a recent article, D. Fairbairn fundamentally agreed with Young, but furthered her argument by proposing that Theodoret, while an able theologian and essentially orthodox, was simply inconsistent when it came to describing Christ’s negative human experiences.<sup>35</sup> That is, in the process of Incarnation the personal subject in Christ was the Logos; however, when talking about Christ’s passion and death on the cross, Theodoret ascribes these experiences to the “assumed man.”<sup>36</sup> However, Fairbairn does not occupy himself extensively with the problem of developments in Theodoret’s Christology. In the most recent major work, which does consider the *Expositio rectae fidei*, P.B. Clayton nevertheless follows the conventional, skeptical line of thinking. For him, Theodoret’s Christology

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30 Kevin McNamara, “Theodoret of Cyrus and the Unity of Person in Christ,” *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 22 (1955): 318.

31 Ibid., 328.

32 Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*,” 173 and 209.

33 Ibid., 354 and 63.

34 Frances M. Young and Andrew Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010). 331.

35 Donald Fairbairn, “The Puzzle of Theodoret’s Christology: A Modest Suggestion,” *Journal of Theological Studies* ns. 58, no. 1 (2007): 132–33.

36 Ibid., 129–30.



was an offspring of the radically divisive Christological model of Theodore of Mopsuestia, and thus it necessitated predication of Nestorian doctrines.<sup>37</sup>

The present survey of the scholarship on the problem of developments in Theodoret's Christology shows an increased interest in Theodoretiana over the past two centuries. His teaching has been hotly debated by scholars, who associate a wide spectrum of Christological teachings with him; some call him an outright Nestorian, while others see him as a completely orthodox theologian wronged by theological bullies from opposing Alexandria. A chronological overview of scholarly works would show that current scholarship is increasingly favorable in its assessments of Theodoret's Christological position.<sup>38</sup> Yet it is evident that most scholars do detect a change or a certain amount of development in his Christology, whether it be a change of the entire system of thought, a mere terminological change, or even an inconsistency arising from an inadequate conception of the union of natures. Of all the scholarly views, it is perhaps D. Fairbairn's critique which shows the greatest unease with Theodoret's Christology. He argues that it was utterly inadequate in positing the Logos as the personal subject of Incarnation.<sup>39</sup> Naturally, this would open Theodoret's Christology up to the criticism of teaching two personal subjects in Christ, i.e., two Sons. This is why any argument for continuity and consistency in Theodoret's Christology must first prove that he did indeed conceive of the Incarnation in a systematized manner in which the Logos is indubitably the personal subject of Christ. This work will show that such a model was indeed present in Theodoret's thought and that there is no reason, either

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37 Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 285–88.

38 This is due in part to a text which was restored to Theodoret in the first half of the twentieth century by Joseph Lebon, Marcel Richard, and R.V. Sellers. The text is the *Expositio rectae fidei*, which had been misattributed to Justin Martyr since at least the seventh century. Yet fortunately for the scholarship on Theodoret, while preparing for publication the text of Severus of Antioch's *Contra impium Grammaticum*, Lebon discovered that Severus expressly attributed parts of the *Expositio* to Theodoret. In separate arguments Richard and Sellers proved the restoration in such a convincing manner that as early as 1946 the great F.L. Cross pronounced the matter of authorship of the *Expositio* settled. See Joseph Lebon, "Restitutions à Théodoret de Cyr," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 26, no. 3 (1930): 523–50.; Marcel Richard, "L'Activité littéraire de Theodoret avant le concile d'Éphèse," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 24 (1935): 83–106.; Robert V. Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 46 (1945): 145–60.; Frank L. Cross, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei,'" *Journal of Theological Studies* 47 (1946): 57–8.

39 Fairbairn, "The Puzzle of Theodoret's Christology: A Modest Suggestion," 129–30.



socio-political or theological, that would necessitate a substantial evolution in his Christology.

### 1.3 Statement of Procedures and Methodology

This work will provide an analysis of Theodoret's Christological language and concepts within their historical context. The main argument is that his Christology did not undergo a fundamental development, but rather a terminological enrichment, during the debates with Cyril of Alexandria and his followers.

The above survey of the scholarly literature shows that studies of Theodoret's Christology include a wealth of material analyzing the polemical period of his theological activity, while very little analysis of his early Christology has been done. Most importantly, the *Expositio rectae fidei*, an early work, contains a substantial amount of Christological material, and yet it has been almost entirely neglected in analyses of Theodoret's Christology and its alleged development. The purpose of this work is to remedy this oversight by providing an analysis of the *Expositio rectae fidei* which critically engages with both its parts, the Trinitarian and the Christological sections. As shall become clear, a study of the Trinitarian section of the work is necessary for understanding the lexical presuppositions of Theodoret's Christology. Lamentably, despite the existence of a critical edition of the text from the latter half of the nineteenth century, the *Expositio* is awaiting translation into a modern language. The study in this book will be based on my own translation of the work into English. A brief study of Theodoret's *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas of Cyril of Alexandria* will serve a dual purpose: to test the conclusions drawn from the study of the *Expositio* and to show that its theological concepts do indeed predate the Nestorian controversy. In order to offer an assessment of the possible development of his Christology, the study will make a comparison with his later Christological output, the most important work of which is the *Eranistes*. The study will consider: the historical context of Theodoret's Christology, his theological language, and the philosophical sources for his theological presuppositions.

I will attempt to show in the analysis of the Christology as evidenced in the *Expositio rectae fidei* and the *Eranistes* that Theodoret's conception of the union of natures in Christ was dictated by the key concept of a sharp distinction between the uncreated and created orders of existence. Yet he still held that the Logos was the subject of the Incarnation. The Logos was the only personal entity at the moment of Incarnation, since Christ's humanity was not complete but was undergoing regular development through human

gestation. This peculiarity effectively precludes the charge of a duality of subjects in Christ.

As previously mentioned, I shall argue here that one cannot speak of a change with regard to Theodoret's Christology, for his teaching remains remarkably consistent throughout his theological output. His Christological teaching is conceived in terms of traditional theological ideas and terminology borrowed from authoritative Church Fathers, most notably the great Cappadocian brothers. Throughout the Christological debates his theological lexicon was enriched, but he did not abandon his original theological concepts, nor did he desert his original terminology. Finally, in the course of this book I will show that the Council of Chalcedon rightly recognized Theodoret as orthodox, for his Christology adhered entirely to its Christological standards which teach of the union of the divine and human natures in the one person of Jesus Christ, who is the Logos-incarnate.



**PART 1**

*The Historical Background*





## Theodoret and the Nestorian Controversy (before AD 431)

Christological orthodoxy was officially defined at the ecumenical council held at Chalcedon in AD 451. The definition of faith specified that Jesus Christ was:

one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same consisting of reasonable soul and a body, of one substance with the Father as touching the Godhead, the same of one substance with us as touching the manhood, like us in all things apart from sin . . . one and the same Christ, Son, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of the natures being in no way abolished because of the union, but rather the characteristic property of each nature being preserved, and occurring into one Person (πρόσωπον) and one subsistence (ὑπόστασις), not as if Christ was parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ. . .<sup>1</sup>

This Chalcedonian definition settled a long theological debate about how it was possible that Jesus Christ be at the same time God and man.

The Christological standard set at Chalcedon was the culmination of a theological dispute that had lasted for over twenty years. While the true origin of the debate can arguably be sought in the Adoptionist tendencies of Paul of Samosata a century and a half before, the subtleties and precision of the debate began around AD 428, when Cyril, the archbishop of Alexandria, challenged the faith of Nestorius, archbishop of Constantinople. Cyril accused Nestorius of Christological inadequacy and, when the latter refused to submit to his opponent's views, had him condemned and deposed. The Church divided swiftly into two Christological camps, and, despite official attempts at

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1 James Stevenson and William H.C. Frend, eds., *Creeds, Councils and Controversies: Documents Illustrating the history of the Church AD 337–461* (London: SPCK, 1989), 352–53. The critical text ACO I, 1, 2, pp. 129–30 (Greek), and ACO II, 3, 2, pp. 137–38 (Latin). Cf. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey*. 210f.; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*. 544.

reconciliation, the arguments between the two parties continued. Chalcedon attempted to put an end to the disputes. As shall become clear in the lines that follow, although the work of Chalcedon was a product not only of the extraordinary theological minds gathered at the council, but also of the many preceding generations who had debated related theological dilemmas, one theologian in particular stands out among those who paved the way for the work of Chalcedon. His name is Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus.

Theodoret was a gifted theologian from the Antiochene milieu. He was a native of Antioch, born ca. AD 393 to an affluent Christian family as an only child. Theodoret's mother, a devout admirer of hermits and holy men living in the vicinity, exposed her son to Christian monastic spirituality and piety from an early age. Theodoret was ordained reader in the church of Antioch while still a child. Later, he moved to a monastery near Apamea, where he was professed.<sup>2</sup> He remained there until AD 423, when he was elected to the see of Cyrrhus, a small rural garrison town in the region of Euphratensis. A mere seven years later, Theodoret entered the Christological controversy as one of the most prominent exponents of the Oriental party. Conventional historical analyses consider that Theodoret's party was defeated at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431. However, here it shall be argued that while the Oriental party was defeated politically, through Theodoret's theological endeavors it was in fact victorious in the theological sense. That is to say, it was defeated in ecclesiastical politics because many of its members were deposed, but, thanks to Theodoret, the theological settlement which ensued was a vindication of Antiochene Christology. Moreover, it was through Theodoret's efforts that the faith was again preserved when the debate was rekindled a decade and a half later. Arguably, it was his theological work that secured the direction of the final Christological definition, which was manifestly in line with Antiochene Christology.

Theodoret was a main contributor to Christological debate for over two decades, during which time his Christology underwent a certain terminological

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2 In an article J.-P. Fourdin recently challenged the conventional position that the name of Theodoret's monastery was Nicerte. Fourdrin argued that identification of Theodoret's monastery with Nicerte was a product of arbitrary scholarly speculation. Rather, he argues, based on modern Arabic toponyms and connection of Nicerte with the grave of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Marwan that the monastery of Nicerte was located about 6 kilometers south east of the village of Ma'arra, about 70 kilometers north east of Apamea (cf. *Chron 819*, 15–16 in Theophilus of Edessa, *Chronicle and the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, trans. Robert G. Hoyland, Translated Texts for Historians, Vol. 57 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011). 217.). See Jean-Pascal Fourdrin, "Note sur la localisation de Nikertai," *Revue des études byzantines* 51 (1993): 180–82.

shift. This chapter will provide a *Sitz im Leben* for Theodoret's Christology by placing it in its historical context in order to indicate the complexity of the atmosphere in which his teaching was formed and systematized. The chapter will include an analysis of the events surrounding both the Christological debates of the fifth century: with Cyril of Alexandria in the Nestorian controversy (AD 428–44), and later with Eutyches and Dioscorus of Alexandria in the Monophysite (or rather Miaphysite) controversy (AD 444–51).<sup>3</sup>

Theodoret's motivation for entering into the controversy between Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Constantinople is somewhat mysterious, for his extensive pastoral work in his diocese demanded all of his attention and energy.<sup>4</sup> In scholarly discussions of Theodoret's motivation, the main emphasis is put on the theological aspect of the controversy.<sup>5</sup> The conventional image of Theodoret portrays him as an avid adversary of heresies.<sup>6</sup> His suspicions that new heretical teachings were arising in the theological debate have been considered sufficient incentive for his involvement. However, the initial motivation for Theodoret's involvement did not come from the theological debates, but was dictated just as much by his sense of justice (on account of a persecuted friend) as by his zeal for theological orthodoxy.

## 2.1 The Origin of the Nestorian Controversy

In the late fall of AD 429, Cyril, archbishop of Alexandria, sent to Nestorius, archbishop of Constantinople, a letter in which he informed him that he had ten days to abandon teaching and his criticisms of the title Theotokos (Birthgiver of God) and to conform to the decisions of the regional councils

3 The controversy is traditionally referred to as the Monophysite Controversy, but this title is misleading because the Eutychian party never argued for *μόνη φύσις* (only one nature) of Christ, but for *μία φύσις* (one nature). The difference is significant, for the latter phrase leaves room for an interpretation of the term *φύσις* as *ὑπόστασις* (subsistence), which is in line with the Christological orthodoxy defined at Chalcedon. In this book the conventional name "Monophysite" is replaced with a more precise term "Miaphysite."

4 See Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 3.

5 This view is reflected in the most recent major monograph on Theodoret's Christology by P.B. Clayton, who argues that "Theodoret considered the Christological controversy to be of essential importance for Christian faith." Ibid., 2.

6 In a number of epistles Theodoret describes his pastoral endeavors in converting "vast numbers of Arians, Marcionites, and other heretics" whom he found in his diocese. See Epp. 81, 113, 116. Cf. Ibid., 3.



held at Rome and Alexandria. These councils were held within weeks of each other, and their main object of discussion was Nestorius's teaching against the title *Theotokos*, commonly used to describe the role of the Virgin Mary in the economy of salvation. Nestorius had been hesitant to sanction the use of the title without proper qualifications that would make clear that the Virgin Mary did not give birth to the Christ *qua* God, but that she gave birth to the man (ἄνθρωπος) Jesus who was conjoined with the Logos, i.e., the second person of the Holy Trinity.<sup>7</sup>

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7 Soon after Nestorius's installation as bishop of Constantinople, he faced a pastoral challenge: in their arguments with the orthodox of the capital, the followers of both the "Arian" and the "Apollinarian" teachings were happy to call the Blessed Virgin Mary *Theotokos*. The "Arians" were content using the title because it supported their challenge to the divinity of the Logos: if Christ was the Logos incarnate and he was born of the *Theotokos*, then he could not have been God by nature, since true divinity is without generation. The "Apollinarians," on the other hand, understood the title *Theotokos* to describe the dynamics of the Incarnation in terms of the mere enfleshment of the Logos without personal human presence in Christ, i.e., the Logos himself took on inanimate human flesh and was the animating principle in Christ. Faced with such a dilemma, Nestorius proclaimed that the title was inadequate without proper qualifications, since it could lead to "confusion" of divinity and humanity in Christ (ACO I, 1, 6, pp. 31–33). He thus reasoned that the title "*Theotokos*" could seriously undermine the very economy of salvation. In the words of H. Chadwick, Nestorius "considered the title "*Theotokos*" as dangerously deifying Mary, whose essential vocation in salvation was to be human, and by her obedience to the divine call, to contribute the humanity to her Son, thereby making the redemption possible." As Socrates testified (HE 7:32), popular opinion was that Nestorius discounted the fact that the title had a very long and revered history of orthodox use. Gregory of Nazianzus declared opponents of the title to be strangers to God (Ep. 101: "If anyone does not believe that Holy Mary is the Mother of God, he is severed from the Godhead"—NPNF<sup>2</sup> 7, 439). Nonetheless, the title remained a stumbling block for many orthodox who could not fully overlook the title's possible pagan connotations, as is evident from the correspondence between Isidore of Pelusium and Cyril of Alexandria (Ep. 1. 201 in PG 78. 312 B).

Also, it deserves to be mentioned here that M. Jugie has argued that Theodore of Mopsuestia, in a sermon at Antioch, had denounced the title "*Theotokos*," but had had to retract his criticism in the face of strong disapproval from the faithful of Antioch (see Martin Jugie, *Theologia dogmatica christianorum orientalium ab ecclesia catholica dissidentium*, vol. 5 (Paris: sumptibus Letouzey et Ané, 1935). 105. n. 1.). However, F. Sullivan is rightly suspicious of M. Jugie's opinion on the grounds that neither John of Antioch, nor Facundus specify what actually disturbed Theodore's audience (see Francis A. Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Rome: apud aedes Universitatis Gregoriana, 1956). 4.). Had Theodore indeed spoken against the title, it would stand to reason that John of Antioch would mention his subsequent acceptance of the title, because of the paramount authority Theodore

Cyril of Alexandria, scandalized by Nestorius's teaching, had waged a strange mixture of intense diplomatic and theological correspondence with Nestorius, while accusing him of heresy before the imperial court and the Church of Rome.

## 2.2 Rome and the Nestorian Controversy

Celestine, the pope of Rome, having little sympathy for Constantinople's aspirations for jurisdictional domination in the Church, and in particular for Nestorius's sheltering of certain Pelagian outcasts from the West, accepted this accusation.<sup>8</sup> The pope, via his archdeacon Leo (later Pope Leo the Great), commissioned the educated abbot John Cassian, who had spent a significant amount of time in the East among the ascetics of Egypt and was intimately acquainted with Greek theological thought, to respond to the teaching of Nestorius.<sup>9</sup> The elderly abbot did so diligently in seven books, which he completed just before the Council of Rome met in August AD 430.<sup>10</sup> He denounced

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exerted over the theologians of the Antiochene milieu. Thus, Nestorius remains the first who openly objected to the title "θεοτόκος."

Being faithful to his theological heritage in the Antiochene milieu which was dominated by the insistence on the reality of Christ's humanity, Nestorius proclaimed that a more suitable title for the Blessed Virgin would be *Christotokos* (Birthgiver of Christ). In his attempts to safeguard Christ's humanity he even used titles *Christodochos* (Receiver of Christ) or *Anthropotokos* (Birthgiver of the human(ity)). For further discussion see Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). 528. Also, Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey*. 4.

8 Cf. John McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy* (Crestwood, New York: svs Press, 2004). 34–8.

9 Admittedly, the reaction from the Church of Rome was by no means immediate. Nestorius wrote two letters to the pope explaining his position. Both were ignored. Rome communicated only with Cyril of Alexandria, whose dossier of Nestorius's teachings was accepted as authoritative. For further discussion see: *ibid.*, 36–7.; Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey*. 5.

10 In the *Collectio Veronensis* (ACO I, 2, p. 20) the beginning of the council is dated to August 10, 430. See also Nestorius, *Nestorianna: Die Fragmente des Nestorius gesammelt, untersucht und herausgegeben von Friedrich Loofs mit beiträgen von Stanley A. Cook und Georg Kampffmeyer* (Halle a. S.: Niemeyer, 1905). 51–57.; Aloys Grillmeier, "Das Scandalum oecumenicum des Nestorius in kirchlich-dogmatischer und theologiegeschichtlicher Sicht," *Scholastik* 36 (1961): 324.

Nestorius's teaching.<sup>11</sup> Needless to say, Nestorius's teaching was expressly condemned at the council. The Pope dispatched a letter titled *Tristitia nostrae* to Cyril of Alexandria, which gave him the right to act as Celestine's proxy in forcing the archbishop of Constantinople to conform to the "faith of Rome and

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11 It is interesting to note that John Cassian dedicated a large portion of his refutation of Nestorius to discussing an alleged connection between Nestorius's teaching and Pelagianism. The motivation for this connection should be sought not only in Nestorius's theology, but also in the history of personal controversy between him and Pope Celestine, related to the power struggle between Constantinople and Rome. After the decision of the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 (Canon 3) to grant the bishops of Constantinople rights of seniority equal to those that the bishops of Rome enjoyed, the former experienced an astronomic increase in ecclesial power and prestige. Sensing the enormous political potential that Constantinople had as the new capital of the empire and the see of the senate, both Rome and Alexandria detested this change. (Mansi, III: 560; Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1 (London and Washington, DC: Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990). 32.)

The strained relations between Rome and Constantinople were transferred into the realm of theology. Early in AD 429 Marius Mercator translated some of Nestorius's letters into Latin, taking great care to connect his teaching to Pelagianism, which was undergoing systematic suppression in the West. Marius Mercator's translation was intended for the Western readership. However, as McGuckin observed, it is "highly doubtful" that anyone in the East made the same connection (McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*. 30–31.). Yet Nestorius had received a number of Pelagianist refugees from Rome who sought asylum in Constantinople and also appealed against the "unjust" persecutions which they had received at the hands of the clergy of Rome. Their case was heard by Nestorius, but there is no information about the actions he took regarding them. Around the same time the controversy with Cyril of Alexandria began, and a case against Nestorius was brought before the pope. Nestorius then decided to write himself to the pope explaining his side. However, although he was a gifted speaker, a very well educated and able clergyman, he sorely lacked in diplomatic finesse. In the letter to the pope in which he defended his orthodoxy, Nestorius tactlessly asked what was the matter with the refugees who sought asylum from the Roman persecutions. Naturally, this was not well received by the pope for two reasons. First, after the Council of Constantinople of AD 381, which in its third canon gave equal rights and honors to the bishop of Constantinople to the bishop of Rome, there was tension between the occupants of the two sees, and in such an atmosphere Nestorius's second-guessing of the pope's decisions seemed to be an insolent provocation. Second, Nestorius's predecessors on the throne of Constantinople condemned Pelagianism as heresy, thus his feigned ignorance of the proceedings put him under suspicion of subscribing to the heresy. Therefore, the motivation for accusing Nestorius of heresy should be sought in the political context of the controversy just as much as in theology.

Alexandria.”<sup>12</sup> The mandate specifically enabled Cyril to ensure that within ten days of the receipt of the letter Nestorius publicly refuted his teaching and acknowledged the orthodoxy of the title Theotokos in writing.<sup>13</sup> If, perchance, Nestorius refused to do so, he was to be cut off from communion with both Rome and Alexandria. The letter envisioned that the matter would be settled between Cyril (acting on behalf of both Rome and Alexandria) and Nestorius.<sup>14</sup> It did not provide for the possibility that the matter could escalate to a universal problem which would require the attention of an ecumenical council. As B.J. Kidd has argued, Celestine’s letter to Cyril by no means gave the latter authority to act as papal proxy at a general council, since the Council of Ephesus was not yet afoot. By the time of the Council of Ephesus (AD 431) the commission was no longer valid.<sup>15</sup> The papal commission to Cyril had set out—ten days from receipt of the letter:

If within ten days of receipt of this message he does not retract his evil preaching in writing and state publicly that he accepts the belief about the birth of Christ held [in common] by the Church of the Romans and your own Church [of Alexandria] and the universal Church, provided that your holiness learns this from that Church he is to be entirely cut off from our body [i.e. of the Church], as one who refused the medicine of healers, and [you shall] leave him and everyone whom he persuaded to perish as those who contracted leprosy.<sup>16</sup>

12 Celestine’s Ep. 11 in PL 50, 460C–464C. The Greek text is preserved in Joannes Dominicus Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum, nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. IV (Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1960–61). 1017. and ACO I.1.1. pp. 75–7. For a helpful analysis of the events from the second half of AD 430, see Donald Fairbairn, “Allies or Merely Friends? John of Antioch and Nestorius in the Christological Controversy,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58, no. 3 (2007): 384.

13 Celestine of Rome, Ep. 11 in PL 50, 464B, Mansi IV, 1020, and ACO I.1.1. p. 77.

14 Beresford J. Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*, vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922). 223.

15 Ibid.. The same is argued by William Bright, *The Age of the Fathers: Chapters in the History of the Church during the Fourth and Fifth Centuries*, vol. II (London, New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903). 311.; Louis Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l’église*, vol. III (Paris: A. Fontemoing, 1923). 349, note 1.; Edward Denny, *Papalism. A Treatise on the Claims of the Papacy as Set Forth in the Encyclical Satis Cognitum* (London: Rivingtons, 1912). 365.

16 ACO I. 1. 1, 77: “... ἐν τὸς δέκα ἡμερῶν ἀριθμουμένων ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς ὑπομνήσεως ταύτης τὰ κακὰ κηρύγματα ἑαυτοῦ ἐγγράφῳ ὁμολογίᾳ ἀθετήσῃ καὶ ἑαυτὸν διαβεβαιώσῃται ταύτην κατέχειν τὴν πίστην περὶ τῆς γεννήσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἣν καὶ ἡ Ῥωμαίων καὶ ἡ τῆς σῆς ἀγιότητος ἐκκλησία καὶ ἡ καθόλου καθοσίωσις κατέχει, ἢ ἔάν μὴ τοῦτο ποιήσῃ, εὐθὺς

However, some eight months later, at the opening of the Council of Ephesus, Cyril of Alexandria claimed that he was acting on behalf of both Churches—Alexandria and Rome.<sup>17</sup>

Pope Celestine also sent letters to Nestorius (*Aliquantis diebus*),<sup>18</sup> and all the notable centers of the East: to the people of Constantinople (*Ad eos qui faciunt*)<sup>19</sup> and a common letter to John of Antioch, Juvenal of Jerusalem, Rufus of Thessalonica (papal emissary), and Flavian of Philippi (*Optaremus quidem*).<sup>20</sup>

Upon receiving the Pope's letter, John of Antioch consulted a number of bishops who in all probability were gathered in Antioch for the consecration of the new bishop of Laodicea.<sup>21</sup> Among those present was Theodoret of Cyrrhus.<sup>22</sup> Although he had been elected and installed bishop only seven years before

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ἡ σὴ ἀγιότης ἐκείνης τῆς ἐκκλησίας προνοησομένη μάθῃ αὐτὸν παντὶ τρόπῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡμετέρου σωματοῦ ἀποκινητέον, ὃς οὕτε τῶν θεραπευόντων ἱασιν ἠβέλησε καταδέξασθαι καὶ εἰς ἀπώλειαν αὐτοῦ τε καὶ πάντων τῶν αὐτῷ ἐμπεπιστευμένων καθὼς λοιμώδης ἠπείχθη." Cf. Mansi IV, 1020 and PL 50, 464B.

- 17 Cyril is referred to as the presiding bishop at the opening of the council and the representative of the pope in a sixth century letter from Mennas of Constantinople and other Greek bishops to Pope Vigilius, see Mansi IX, 62. See also Jean Hardouin, ed. *Conciliorum collectio regia maxima, ad P.O. Labbe & P.G. Cossartii labores*, vol. 3 (Paris: Ex Tipographia Regia, 1714), 10.; Karl J. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: Clark, 1883). 45–6.
- 18 Celestine's Ep. 13 in PL 50, 470B–486A, Mansi IV, 1025–36 and ACO I.1.1. pp. 77–81.
- 19 Celestine's Ep. 14, in PL 50, 486A–500A, Mansi IV, 1035–46 and ACO I.1.1. pp. 83–90
- 20 Celestine's Ep. 12, in PL 50, 466A–470B, Mansi IV, 1047–50 and ACO I.1.1. pp. 90–3.
- 21 See ACO I, 1, 1, 96. Jackson (NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 5) suggested that Celestine's letter reached John of Antioch while he was hosting an assembly of bishops who were gathered at the occasion of consecration of the new bishop of Laodicea. Clayton follows Jackson's suggestion: Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 15. There is no direct evidence to support Jackson's theory. John does mention in the letter "the future bishop Macarius, who is envisioned by the grace of God for the church of Laodicea"; see Mansi IV, 1061–68 and ACO I, 1, 1, 96. Given the importance of the bishops mentioned in the letter, it is very likely that Jackson was right, for the metropolitan bishops must have gathered in Antioch for a solemn purpose of the consecration of the new metropolitan of Phrygia, which superseded the competence of their local assemblies (bishops of Laodicea enjoyed the rank of metropolitan bishop; see Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church: Apostolic Christianity 1–100 AD*, 8 vols., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1980). par. 94.; Raymond Janin, "Constantinople," in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, ed. Alfred Baudillart, Et. van Cauwenbergh, and A. de Meyer (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1956), 651–52.), would provide ample reason for the gathering.
- 22 See Mansi IV, 1061–68 and ACO I, 1, 1, 96.

(AD 423), he already made a name for himself in the theological world through his apologetical work. Soon after he succeeded to his bishopric, Theodoret began a fervent battle against numerous heresies which seemed to be flourishing in his remote and insignificant rural diocese.<sup>23</sup> As a young bishop Theodoret had already written a couple of treatises against Judaism and Hellenic paganism.<sup>24</sup> By AD 430 he had also written an important theological treatise, *Exposition of the True Faith* (*Ἐκθεσις τῆς ὁρθοδόξου/ὁρθῆς πίστεως* or *Expositio Rectae Fidei*), which contained a discussion of both Trinitarian and Christological doctrinal questions.<sup>25</sup> These theological works, coupled with his extensive learning,<sup>26</sup> an extraordinary gift for oration,<sup>27</sup> and an impeccable

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- 23 In the Epp. 81, 113, and 116 Theodoret listed a number of heresies, besides Jews and pagans, which he found upon arrival in his diocese: Marcionites, Arians, Eunomians, Manicheans, and Encratites. In Ep. 113 he insists that his diocese was free of heretics by AD 449 when he wrote the letter to Leo of Rome. This is no small achievement bearing in mind that his diocese numbered about 800 parishes (see Ep. 113 in Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 96–147, ed. H. de Lubac and J. Daniélou, trans. Y. Azéma, vol. 3, Sources chrétiennes, Vol. 111 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1965). 62–64.).
- 24 The dating of Theodoret's apologetical work against Jews and Greeks (pagans) relies on his own witness from the opening lines of the *Expositio*. It is widely accepted that the *Expositio* predates the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy (see: M. Richard, "L'activité littéraire de Théodoret," 103 and, albeit reluctantly, Jean-Noël Guinot, "L'Expositio rectae fidei et le traité sur la Trinité et l'Incarnation de Théodoret de Cyr: deux types d'argumentation pour un même propos?," in *Théodoret de Cyr exégète et théologien* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2012), 187. reprint of Jean Noël Guinot, "L'Expositio rectae fidei et le traité sur la Trinité et l'Incarnation de Théodoret de Cyr: deux types d'argumentation pour un même propos?," *Recherches Augustiniennes* 32 (2001).). This places Theodoret's apologetical work mentioned in the *Expositio* to the early years of his episcopate. For the conventional dating of Theodoret's works see Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 71–72.
- 25 PG 6: 1207–40; Critical text in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. ed. Johann Karl Theodor von Otto, vol. III. pars I, Iustini philosophi et martyris opera quae feruntur omnia—Corpus apologetarum christianorum saeculi secundi (Wiesbaden: Dr. Martin Sändig oHG., 1969), 2–67.
- 26 It is a widely recognized fact that Theodoret was a highly educated man. R. Price argues that he studied Greek grammar and an already established syllabus of Greek classics, from Homer to Demosthenes. (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *A History of the Monks of Syria*, trans. R.M. Price, Cistercian Studies Series, Vol. 88 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1985). xii.). Theodoret's impeccable Attic style, in addition to the extensive list of classical sources which he used in his writings, suggest a refined literary taste.
- 27 In the Ep. 83 Theodoret says that he preached in Antioch for years. His hearers received the sermons with great enthusiasm, applauding his rhetorical skill. As an example, Theodoret

style of language,<sup>28</sup> quickly established him as the leading theologian of the Orient.

Thus, when John of Antioch received the troubling letter from Celestine which openly threatened his friend Nestorius with excommunication unless he revoked publicly and in writing his theological errors, Theodoret appears among the bishops whom John consulted before sending a letter to Nestorius, at the end of November AD 430, admonishing him to accept the title Theotokos and to conform to the conditions of Rome and Alexandria.<sup>29</sup> As D. Fairbairn observed, John believed that Nestorius's opposition to the title was "simple nitpicking" and he urged him to "desist from such hair-splitting and affirm the saving truth that God the Son was truly born from Mary."<sup>30</sup> In the letter John explicitly stated that he was writing with the approval of Theodoret and a number of bishops whom John mentions only by their Christian names, which suggests a certain degree of familiarity.<sup>31</sup> John's testimony is important

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says that when he preached John of Antioch was so "delighted at my discourses as to raise both hands and again and again to start up" (NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 278): "... ὅς [Ἰωάννης] τοσοῦτον ἐγάννυτο διαλεγόμεν ἡμῶν, ὥς ἄμφω τῷ χεῖρι κινεῖν καὶ διανίστασθαι πολλάκις." (Theodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 1–95, ed. H. de Lubac and J. Daniélou, trans. Y. Azéma, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes, Vol. 98 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1964). 208.)). In the Ep. 147 Theodoret says that at the end of his sermons in Antioch, his fellow clergymen would "embrace me and kiss me, on head, on breast, on hands, and some of them would cling to my knees, calling my doctrine apostolic..." (NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 323): "... μετὰ τὸ τέλος τῆς διαλέξεως περιπτύσσοντο, καὶ κατεφίλου, καὶ κεφαλὴν, καὶ στήθη, καὶ χεῖρας· τινὲς δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ γονάτων ἤπτοντο, τὴν διδασκαλίαν ἡμῶν ἀποστολικὴν ὀνομάζοντες. (Theodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 96–147. 96.).

28 Photius of Constantinople praised without reservation the Attic purity of Theodoret's style and the clarity of his thought in *Bibliotheca* codex 203 in PG 103, 675D and 676A.

29 Based on the style of the letter, M. Monica Wagner argued that it was written by John of Antioch himself, and not by Theodoret: M. Monica Wagner, "A Chapter in Byzantine Epistolography: The Letters of Theodoret of Cyrrhus," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 4 (1948): 176–77. Yet as John explicitly says, Theodoret approved of the letter.

30 Fairbairn, "Allies or Merely Friends? John of Antioch and Nestorius in the Christological Controversy," 390.

31 At the end of his letter to Nestorius from the end of November AD 430, John of Antioch says that his advice to accept the title Theotokos is shared by the "most God-loving bishops Archelaus, Apringius, Theodoret, Heliades, Meletius and the future bishop Macarius, who is envisioned by the grace of God for the church of Laodicea"; see: Mansi IV, 1061–68 and ACO I, 1, 1, 96. B.J. Kidd argued that the bishops mentioned in John's letter were friends of both Nestorius and John: Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 223. Kidd's argument is convincing, because it would have been redundant to refer to these bishops by name



for two reasons: first, it demonstrates that Theodoret was held in high standing in the Oriental theological milieu,<sup>32</sup> and second, it points to Theodoret's early involvement in the controversy.<sup>33</sup>

### 2.3 Cyril's Twelve Anathemas and the Escalation of the Controversy

It is surprising to discover an entirely different attitude among the Orientals only a few weeks later. The change in tone and the nature of their involvement in the controversy, which rapidly advanced from passive counsel to active polemics, came as a response to Cyril's anathemas. These he sent to Nestorius at the beginning of December 430 in his *Third Letter to Nestorius*.<sup>34</sup> The latter, without delay, forwarded Cyril's letter to John of Antioch on Sunday,

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had Nestorius not known them personally. In that case, John's authority and a general reference to a conciliar assessment of the question at stake would have been sufficient.

32 Theodoret, although bishop of an insignificant bishopric in the region of Cyrrhestica in the metropolis of Hierapolis, is mentioned here by John of Antioch in the company of metropolitans and bishops occupying important episcopal sees: Archelaus of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Apringius of Chalcis in Syria, Heliades of Ptolemais in Phoenicia, Meletius of Mopsuestia in Cilicia, Macarius of Laodicea in Asia. The positive identification of the bishops has been established by Schwartz in ACO I, 1, 8, 14–25.

33 Jerry L. Stewardson rightly argued that Theodoret did not enter into the controversy between Nestorius and Cyril until late AD 430 or early 431, and that John's letter to Nestorius from late November 430 marks the first instance of involvement (see Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 131.). The very fact that the conflict between Cyril and Nestorius lasted for over a year and a half without any significant involvement on the Orientals's part in defending their peer is indicative of the manner in which it was taken at the beginning. The seeming indifference shows that it was understood to be a personal conflict between two bishops, hardly worth attention.

A similar attitude toward the controversy was eventually adopted by Cyril's side as well. His spiritual father, Isidore of Pelusium warned him to check his motivations. He says that "people began talking" that the real reason for the controversy with Nestorius was his personal spite rather than theology—just as his uncle Theophilus persecuted John Chrysostom, so now he persecutes Nestorius: "Πολλοὶ γὰρ σε καωμῶδοῦσι τῶν συνειλεγμένων εἰς Ἐφεσον, ὡς οἰκείαν ἀμυνόμενον ἔχθραν, ἀλλ' οὐ τὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὀρθοδόξως ζητοῦντα. Ἀδελφίδους ἐστι, φασί, Θεοφίλου, μιμούμενος ἐκείνου τὴν γνώμην." (Ep. I, 310 in PG 78, 361C).

Therefore, in the beginning, the popular view was that the entire controversy was a little more than a personal exchange between two bishops.

34 The chronology of the events of late AD 430 is convincingly established by D. Fairbairn in Fairbairn, "Allies or Merely Friends? John of Antioch and Nestorius in the Christological Controversy," 383–99.



December 7, 430, together with copies of two of his sermons, which he had preached that day and the day before (Saturday, December 6).<sup>35</sup>

In both of these sermons Nestorius fulfilled all the requirements in Celestine's letter. He publicly acknowledged that the Virgin Mary could be properly called Theotokos, inasmuch as the term was understood to refer to Christ's human nature, since Christ *qua* Logos is without generation (in terms of the beginning of existence) by definition. It must be noted that Nestorius announced this publicly before his congregation and had the sermons written down.<sup>36</sup> In the letter to John of Antioch, Nestorius repeated his acceptance of the title Theotokos.<sup>37</sup> It is certain that John received the letter, since he refers to it in a letter to Firmus of Caesarea.<sup>38</sup> All of this was done within the timeframe which Celestine set in his ultimatum. Thus, strictly speaking, Celestine's mandate to Cyril ceased in December 430. Cyril had no right to pursue the matter further on behalf of the Church of Rome. The fact that he did suggests certain personal motivations.

This fact did not escape the attention of the Orientals, who, in the later controversy, exhibited very little of their initial charity towards Cyril's arguments. After Cyril's *Third Letter to Nestorius* with its *Twelve Anathemas* against Nestorius's Christological position reached Antioch, the irenic tone of John of Antioch and Theodoret of Cyrrhus yielded to open enmity toward Cyril and his theological position.<sup>39</sup> This change of attitude is unmistakable in the request that John of Antioch made of Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Andrew of Samosata, the two most prominent Oriental theologians for refutation of Cyril's *Anathemas*.<sup>40</sup> It is also evident in Theodoret's letter to John of Antioch that accompanied his *Refutation of Cyril's Twelve Anathemas*. Evidently enraged at

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35 ACO 1.4.4–6.

36 See ACO 1, 4, 7: "... sancta virgo et dei genetrix est et homini genetrix, dei quidem genetrix ideo quia illud templum quod in ea ex spiritu sancto creatum est ..."

37 See ACO 1, 4, 5.

38 ACO 1.4.8. (see lines 3–7); on the same letter see Fairbairn, "Allies or Merely Friends? John of Antioch and Nestorius in the Christological Controversy," 385.

39 This sudden change was brought about by Cyril's *Third Letter to Nestorius* in which he offered twelve Christological propositions threatening with anathema all those who dissented from his teaching. Such language shows some impatience on Cyril's part, which was stimulated by resolute support from Rome.

40 Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 238–39.; Richard, "Notes sur l'évolution doctrinale de Théodoret," 463.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 17.

the *Anathemas*, he denounced them as a “heretical” and “blasphemous” revival of the “impious teaching of Apollinarius.”<sup>41</sup>

However, his tone in the *Refutation* itself is much more moderate. In the text of the *Refutation* Theodoret did not make harsh, direct, or personal accusations of heresy against Cyril, but simply pointed out the inadequacy of his Christological position. As the analysis of the *Twelve Anathemas* in the second part of this book will show, Theodoret was concerned that the language used in the *Anathemas* could seriously endanger the reality of both the divinity and humanity of Christ, rendering the union achieved in the Incarnation ineffectual for salvation and thus purposeless.

## 2.4 The Council of Ephesus (AD 431)

### 2.4.1 *The Convocation of the Council*

On November 19, AD 430, Emperor Theodosius II dispatched a letter to all metropolitan bishops of the empire summoning them to come to Ephesus at Pentecost the following year in order to settle the doctrinal issues raised in the dispute between Cyril and Nestorius. The letter also bore the name of Valentinian III, the ruler of the Western Empire, giving the summons an ecumenical character. Each metropolitan was allowed a small entourage of suffragans.<sup>42</sup>

It is important to note that the council was convoked before the controversy between Cyril and the Antiochene party escalated to outright enmity. The convocation was issued a couple of weeks before Cyril's *Third Letter to*

41 Theodoret, *Ep.* 150; ET from NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 324. The original text reads: “... τὰς αἰρετικὰς καὶ βλασφημίας ῥῆξε φωνὰς καὶ τὴν πάλαι σβεσθεῖσαν Ἀπολλιναρίου ὁμοῦ καὶ δυσσεβῆ διδασκαλίαν ἀνανεώσασθαι...” in: Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Collections conciliaires*, ed. H. de Lubac and J. Daniélou, trans. Y. Azéma, vol. 4, Sources chrétiennes, Vol. 429 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998). 64. As J.-N. Guinot argued, the *Twelve Anathemas* are “au coeur du conflit doctrinal.” See Jean Noël Guinot, “La réception antiochienne des écrits de Cyrille d’Alexandrie d’après le témoignage de Théodoret de Cyr,” in *Théodoret de Cyr exégète et théologien* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2012), 262.

42 Mansi IV, 1102 and ACO I, 2, pp. 114–16; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 40. Eduard Schwartz, “Zur Vorgeschichte des ephesinischen Konzils,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 112 (1914): 258. Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*,” 18.; Peter L’Huillier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils: The Disciplinary Work of the First Four Ecumenical Councils* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1995). 145.

*Nestorius* with the *Twelve Anathemas* arrived in Constantinople. Its ecumenicity is reflected in the universal eagerness for convocation of such a council.

In hindsight, it is ironic to note that *Nestorius* requested an assessment of the issue by an ecumenical council which would later bring about his downfall.<sup>43</sup> But his request alone does not fully account for the summons, since his opponents in Constantinople expressed the same aspiration. The monks of the capital complained of the ill-treatment they received from *Nestorius* and they too sought the refuge and protection of an ecumenical council.<sup>44</sup> However, the motivation for the emperor's intervention should not be sought only in the ecclesiastical affairs surrounding the controversy. Imperial power politics must be taken into account when considering the events that led to the convocation of the Council of Ephesus.

Theodosius II was a natural ally of *Nestorius*, since the latter was brought to Constantinople and consecrated bishop of the capital at the insistence of the emperor. *Nestorius*'s ecclesiastical politics met with little approbation among the people, yet the emperor saw in his pontificate an opportunity for advancing his global ecclesiastical politics. The archbishops of Alexandria had been gaining power and influence in Egypt since the time of *Athanasius*.<sup>45</sup> Their power kept growing throughout the fourth century, propelled by the cunning diplomacy of *Theophilus* of Alexandria (*Cyril*'s uncle).

*Cyril*'s tenure as archbishop furthered the enormous accumulated power and prestige of Alexandria.<sup>46</sup> From the outset of his tenure, *Cyril* entered into conflict with the imperial authorities. He was elected to the see of Alexandria despite the best efforts of *Abudantius*, the imperial commander of the garrisons in Egypt, to prevent it. He was also in constant confrontation with the urban prefect *Orestes*. *Cyril*'s power rose to such an extent that he even commanded a small private army of *parabalani*, originally medical personnel but later transformed into bludgeon-wielding personal bodyguards of the

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43 Cf. *Nestorius's* 3rd Letter to *Celestine* in *Nestorius, Nestorianna: Die Fragmente des Nestorius gesammelt, untersucht und herausgegeben von Friedrich Loofs mit beiträgen von Stanley A. Cook und Georg Kampffmeyer*. 182.; *Mansi* v, 752; also *Hefele, History of the Councils of the Church*. 28.

44 *Evagrius*, *HE* I, 7; Cf. *Mansi* IV, 1102; *Hefele, History of the Councils of the Church*. 40.

45 *Eusebius* of *Nicomedia* had already complained that "It could be said of the bishop of Alexandria that he was a rich man and powerful and ready for anything." (*Athanasius, Apol. c. Arian*. 9).

46 *McGuckin* rightly noted that with *Theophilus* and *Cyril* the see of Alexandria reached its zenith: *McGuckin, Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*. 7.

archbishop.<sup>47</sup> Socrates summarized well the political aspect of Cyril's pontificate: "Cyril came into possession of the episcopate with greater power than Theophilus had ever exercised. For from that time the bishopric of Alexandria went beyond the limits of its sacerdotal functions and assumed the administration of secular matters."<sup>48</sup> That such extensive power belonged to a recalcitrant archbishop must have been a major inconvenience for the emperor and the political power structure of the empire. Thus it was natural for Theodosius to support Nestorius's attempt to reduce the power and influence of the archbishop of Alexandria.

Another reason for Theodosius's support of Nestorius and the convocation of the Council of Ephesus should be sought in the events of the previous summer. As previously mentioned, the Council of Rome, which met in August AD 430, condemned the theology of the archbishop of Constantinople. The condemnation was likely a result of the long-standing controversy between Rome and Constantinople caused by the transfer of the axis of power from Rome to the New Rome (Constantinople) in AD 330, and fuelled by the decision of the Council of Constantinople AD 381 to match the prerogatives of the bishops of Rome with those of the bishops of Constantinople. The news of the decisions of the council of Rome must have reached Theodosius, who saw in the convocation of an ecumenical council an opportunity to send a message to Rome that, although the archbishop of Alexandria might think so, the decisions of Rome were not final and irrevocable.<sup>49</sup>

The emperor's motivations for supporting Nestorius and his Oriental supporters are also evident in his decision on the outcome of the Council of Ephesus. The emperor showed great respect for the Antiochene party's positions, advocated by Theodoret of Cyrrhus. He expressly refused to accept the condemnations of heresy and subsequent depositions that Cyril's council exacted upon its Oriental opponents.

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47 See Wilhelm Schubart, "Parabalani," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 40 (1954).; Alexandre Philipsborn, "La compagnie d'ambulanciers 'Parabalani' d'Alexandrie," *Byzantion* 20, no. 185–90 (1950).; McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*. 7ff.

48 Socrates, HE 7, 7 and 7, 13. See also McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*. 7.

49 Wilhelm de Vries, *Orient et Occident: les structures ecclésiales vues dans l'histoire des sept premiers conciles œcuméniques* (Paris: Cerf, 1974). 85.; L'Huillier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils: The Disciplinary Work of the First Four Ecumenical Councils*. 145.; Kenneth G. Holm, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982). 113.

### 2.4.2 *The Venue of the Council*

The decision on the venue of the council remains an enigma. Ephesus was a stronghold of Marian piety<sup>50</sup> due to its long history of female divine worship, which supposedly had been associated to the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>51</sup> The conventional view is that the decision to hold the council in Ephesus must have been made by a very powerful factor, one hostile to Nestorius. Augusta Pulcheria, the older sister and ex-regent of Emperor Theodosius II, is traditionally singled out as the most likely candidate for making this decision, due to the personal strife that existed between the two, which began with Nestorius's challenge to her reputation.

By the first half of the fifth century, it had become evident that the end of the long-fading Roman civic religion was drawing near. Through a skillful maneuver Pulcheria managed to preserve the great dignity which the old religion reserved for the imperial family.<sup>52</sup> She publicly took a vow of chastity and devoted her life to prayer and charitable work. However, she was careful not to take monastic vows, which would confine her to a monastery and effectively end her political career. The elderly archbishop of Constantinople, Atticus, supervised Pulcheria's spiritual wellbeing. He even wrote a treatise *On Faith and Virginity*, which he dedicated to Pulcheria and her sisters. In the treatise he affirmed that women consecrated in chastity would receive Christ in the womb of their faith, comparing chaste women with the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Theotokos.<sup>53</sup> This intensified Pulcheria's reverence for the Theotokos. The title, previously present only in the popular religion, rose quickly to a prominent role.

The association of part of the imperial household with the Blessed Virgin effectively helped bridge the gap, which the dissolution of the Roman civic religion had left in regards to the dignity of the imperial family. The association

50 Even the cathedral church in Ephesus was dedicated to "Mary the Theotokos." See Cyril of Alexandria Ep. 24 in Mansi IV, 1241: "ἡ ἀγία σύνοδος γέγονεν ἐν τῇ Ἐφέσῳ, ἐν τῇ μεγάλῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῆς πόλεως, ἣ τις καλεῖται Μαρία Θεοτόκος."

51 Ephesus was famous for its devotion to Artemis (Diana), whose renowned temple was included among the seven wonders of the Ancient World. The popularity of devotion to Artemis at Ephesus is attested even in the Acts of the Apostles (19: 23–29). See: Simon Vailhé, "Ephesus," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Charles G. Herbermann, et al. (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913), 490–91.

52 Vasiliki Limberis, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994). 62.; Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*. 79–111.

53 See Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*. 138–40.

Atticus made between chaste women and the Theotokos paved the way for a modified, but nonetheless renewed, association of the imperial family with divinity. Pulcheria must have detested Nestorius's attack on the title Theotokos.

Nestorius held that Pulcheria was not honest in her vow of chastity and informed the emperor of his view.<sup>54</sup> He also made little effort to hide his aversion for the Augusta. Nestorius stopped referring to Pulcheria as a "bride of Christ" in public prayers, discontinued the practice of entertaining the princesses for dinner in the episcopal palace after the Sunday communion, removed Pulcheria's portrait from above the altar in the cathedral, and removed her robe from the Holy Table, where it had served as an altar covering. Nestorius also publicly humiliated Pulcheria by refusing her entry to the sanctuary on Easter Sunday to receive communion inside the altar area.<sup>55</sup> When she invoked the words of Atticus saying: "Why? Have I not given birth to God?" Nestorius, shocked, replied: "You?! You have given birth to Satan!"<sup>56</sup> Thus, Nestorius's antagonism towards Pulcheria must have engendered extreme enmity on her part.

Evidently, Nestorius caused Pulcheria's hostility on two levels: political and personal. Unfortunately for the archbishop, one of the traits of Pulcheria's character seems to have been a desire for vengeance. For example, after the death of Theodosius II in AD 450, Pulcheria exacted her revenge on the eunuch Chrysaphius, who some ten years previously had usurped her authority and power and taken control of the weak emperor, by beheading him. Thus, Ephesus, a regional center of Marian piety, would suit Pulcheria well as a venue for the council where she could exact her revenge on the disobedient and impudent archbishop and would send a clear message to anyone foolish enough to attempt a similar outrage.<sup>57</sup>

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54 "Vous aviez encore avec vous contre moi une femme belliqueuse, une reine, jeune fille vierge, laquelle combattait contre moi parce que je ne voulais pas accueillir sa demande de comparer à l'épouse du Christ (une personne) corrompue par les hommes"; Nestorius, *Le livre d'Héraclide de Damas*, ed. François Nau (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, Éditeurs, 1910). 89.

55 Nestorius, "Lettre à Cosme," in *Documents pour servir à l'histoire de l'Église nestorienne: textes syriaques*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 13, François Nau (ed.), (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1916), 279.; cf. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*. 153.; McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*. 25.

56 Nestorius, "Lettre à Cosme." 275–86.; Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*. 153.

57 However, R.M. Price argued that Pulcheria, together with Theodosius II, supported Nestorius until the Council of Ephesus. His argument is based on the supposition that the ancient sources, most notably the *Letter to Cosmas*, do not faithfully reflect Nestorius's relationship with Pulcheria (see Richard M. Price, "Marian Piety and the Nestorian

### 2.4.3 *The Eve of the Council of Ephesus AD 431*

Between the convocation of the council and its opening, a number of important events took place: the *Third Letter of Cyril to Nestorius* bearing the *Anathemas* arrived in Constantinople, and as previously mentioned, John of Antioch and the Oriental bishops reacted to them with resolute antagonism, and the foremost Oriental theologians Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Andrew of Samosata both wrote *Refutations of Cyril's Twelve Anathemas*.

Cyril responded directly to these attacks. Moreover, he wrote separate letters to the important personages in Constantinople, most notably the

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Controversy," in *The Church and Mary*, ed. R.N. Swanson, *Studies in Church History* 39 (Suffolk and Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2004), 31–38.). For Price, the fact that in a sermon preached in December AD 430 (i.e., after the convocation of the council) Nestorius says that "the Emperor is pious and the Augustae love God" suggests that the Augustae were favorably disposed towards Nestorius. However, Price does not account for the possibility that this was most likely just a manner of speaking. For example, in his reply to the *Second Letter of Cyril* Nestorius refutes the latter's Christological position as heretical, but at the beginning of the letter addresses Cyril as "the most reverend and godly fellow servant" (see Stevenson and Frend, eds., *Creeeds, Councils and Controversies: Documents Illustrating the history of the Church AD 337–461*, 298.). Also, the bishops at the Councils would refer to one other by such exalted titles as "most pious" or "most devout" even when they were accusing one other of heresy. The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, which have come down to us, are replete with such turns of phrase. See *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: General Introduction, Documents before the Council, Session 1*, vol. 1, Translated Texts for Historians, Vol. 45 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005).; *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Sessions 11–X, Session on Carosus and Dorotheus, Session on Photius and Eustathius, Session on Domnus*, vol. 2, Translated Texts for Historians, Vol. 45 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005).; *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Sessions XI–XVI, Documents after the Council, Appendices, Glossary, Bibliography, Maps, Indices*, vol. 3, Translated Texts for Historians, Vol. 45 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005).

Price found further evidence for his argument in a letter by Cyril's *syncellus* and arch-deacon Epiphanius, who lamented Pulcheria's supposed lack of zeal for Cyril's cause despite many "benedictions," i.e., bribes (see Price, "Marian Piety and the Nestorian Controversy," 34.). It must be mentioned here that it would be anachronistic to take the letter of Epiphanius as evidence of Pulcheria's disposition toward Nestorius before the Council of Ephesus, since it was written only in AD 432. Pulcheria's lack of direct support for Cyril is easily explained by her political aspirations. Her main goal was the removal of Nestorius from the See of Constantinople. The limitation and restriction of the power of the episcopal see of Constantinople which Cyril desired would not suit her goals of expanding the influence of the capital. Thus their aims in the controversy were not entirely congruent. Pulcheria, although rightly suspicious of Cyril, was still fervently opposed to Nestorius.



Augustae, arguing his position against Nestorius. From a rather heated letter from Theodosius to Cyril, one learns that Cyril's strategy was to cause discord within the imperial household and win the powerful sisters of the emperor to his cause against Nestorius.<sup>58</sup>

The vigorous diplomatic activity that Cyril undertook on the eve of Ephesus suggests a certain nervousness on his part which led him to commit a couple of rather serious *faux pas*. Soon after the emperor announced his intention to settle the dispute in an ecumenical council, Cyril sent the *Third Letter to Nestorius* attaching the *Anathemas*. It will become evident later in this work that had Cyril not sent those inflammatory Christological propositions in the form of *Anathemas*, Nestorius and the Antiochene party would have been prepared to compromise on the doctrinal level and the matter would have been settled peacefully. Around the same time, Cyril committed another rash mistake: he secretly wrote to the Augustae, trying to sway their favor toward his cause. As noted above, this act was unnecessary, since the ousting of Nestorius would greatly suit Pulcheria's plans anyway. For this, he was publicly chastised by the emperor.<sup>59</sup>

#### 2.4.4 *The Sessions of the Council of Ephesus*

The Council was convoked for Pentecost, June 7, 431. Despite the emperor's explicit instruction that each metropolitan bring a small entourage, Cyril arrived at Ephesus on June 6 with a large delegation of supporters. Memnon of Ephesus, together with his clergy, immediately joined the Egyptians.

It is not certain whether Nestorius arrived at Ephesus at the same time as Cyril or a few days before.<sup>60</sup> However, his entourage included a number of

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58 Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 236.; Emile Amann, "Nestorius," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, ed. Alfred Vacant, et al. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, Éditeurs, 1931), 106–07.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 18.

59 Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 236.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 18.

60 Certain sources give Easter Sunday (April 19th) as the day of Nestorius's arrival in Ephesus. Others place his arrival on the same day as Cyril's (June 6th). It is very unlikely that Nestorius was absent from the capital on Easter and that he could afford such an unnecessarily prolonged absence from Constantinople (Bardy, "Théodoret," 300.; Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 239–40.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 19–20.)

Moreover, Nestorius must have known from his correspondence with the Antiochenes about their plans to begin traveling only after celebrating Pentecost. Thus, there was very little need for him to spend any unnecessary time in the hostile Ephesus. It is more likely that Nestorius arrived a few days before the planned opening.



important court officials, his personal friend Count Irenaeus, and the emperor's representative, Count Candidian.

The Antiochene party, led by John of Antioch, was delayed in arriving at Ephesus. They began their journey only after celebrating Pentecost at home. They undertook the journey on land and were further delayed by spring floods. However, they sent Theodoret of Cyrrhus, together with his metropolitan, Alexander of Hierapolis, as messengers asking for deferment of the opening of the council. Theodoret unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the gathered church officials to wait for John of Antioch.<sup>61</sup>

Cyril, however, grew anxious and opened the council on June 22, 431 neglecting the fact that the emperor had ordered that council not meet before all the invited parties were gathered. Neither the Orientals nor the representatives of Rome had arrived, and to add insult to injury, the council was opened in spite of the protestations of the imperial commissioner, Count Candidian. At the first session of the council, Candidian and some of Nestorius's supporters were evicted from the proceedings while Nestorius was summoned to answer for his teaching. Naturally, he refused to appear before the council, stating as his reason the apparent procedural irregularities. After he had ignored three summonses, the accusations of heresy made against him in Cyril's *Second and Third Letters* (including the *Twelve Anathemas*) were read out, and he was condemned and deposed.<sup>62</sup>

The Orientals arrived at Ephesus on June 22, 431. Upon learning of the proceedings of Cyril's council, they convoked a council of their own, annulled the decisions made at that council, and then deposed and excommunicated Cyril and Memnon, together with their followers, until such time as they renounced Cyril's *Twelve Anathemas*.<sup>63</sup>

Roman legates arrived on July 10, 431. They immediately joined Cyril's council and a second session followed at which Celestine's letter was read and the legates were informed of the proceedings of the first session. At the third session the legates assented to Nestorius's deposition. At the fourth and fifth sessions (July 16–17, 431) John of Antioch and his council of thirty-five bishops were

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61 Bardy, "Théodoret," 300.; Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 239–40.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 19–20.

62 Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 244.; Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 239–40.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 20.

63 Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 245–46.; Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 242–43.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 21.

excommunicated.<sup>64</sup> At the sixth session (July 22, 431), Cyril's council decided that no creed but the Nicene Creed should be used. This decision came as a response to a question about the legitimacy of using the Antiochene baptismal creed in the diocese of Philadelphia.<sup>65</sup> At the last seventh session (July 31, 431) Cyprus was given autonomy from the jurisdiction of Antioch.<sup>66</sup>

In this atmosphere of antagonism between the supporters of Cyril and the Antiochenes, the decisions reached by Cyril's council have a semblance of reprisal rather than of ecclesiastical jurisprudence. The Antiochenes rejected the legitimacy of Cyril's council, and the council retaliated by rewarding its members with prerogatives of jurisdiction at the expense of Antioch (e.g., Juvenal, archbishop of Jerusalem, was awarded jurisdictional control over a significant portion of Palestine at the expense of Antioch as a reward for his loyalty to Cyril's council).<sup>67</sup>

## 2.5 Reactions to the Decision of the Council of Ephesus

Cyril's council dealt serious blows to the prestige of Antioch. By condemning Nestorius at the first session, it put the Antiochene Christological position under suspicion by association, a suspicion which was evident in the decision of the sixth session, at which the Antiochene baptismal creed was denounced.

Besides being attacked on the doctrinal level, Antioch was assaulted on the jurisdictional and political levels. The decisions of the fourth and fifth sessions were designed to counteract any possible consequences of the excommunication of Cyril's partisans by the council of the Orientals. Moreover, the decision of the seventh session to exclude Cyprus from the Antiochene sphere of influence was a further blow to Antiochene interests.

It is no surprise then to see that Theodoret's position toward Cyril and his Christology changed. The events around the Council of Ephesus led Theodoret to abandon his initial charity toward Cyril. It was quickly replaced by more heated language. Two letters authored by Theodoret on behalf of the Oriental party, describe his perception of the situation in Ephesus in the summer of

64 Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 244–46.; Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 248–49.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 21.

65 Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 250–51.; Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 247.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 22.

66 Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 248–49.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 22.

67 Cf. Ernest Honigsmann, "Juvenal of Jerusalem," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5 (1950): 209–79.

AD 431. Ep. 157 (PG 83, 1451–1453; ACO I, 1, 5, pp. 129–31) and 158 (PG 83, 1453–1455; ACO I, 1, 5, p. 131) are both addressed to the emperor on behalf of the Oriental party. After describing the general disorder and complaining that the Oriental party was under “extreme threat” from unruly Ephesian hordes, Theodoret now directly accused Cyril of reviving Apollinarianism. In the letters Theodoret lamented the looming danger of heresy, citing it as the main reason for discord.<sup>68</sup>

In August AD 431 Count John, the new imperial commissioner, arrived at Ephesus declaring that the emperor accepted the depositions pronounced by both councils. Cyril, Memnon, and Nestorius were deposed and put under arrest, while the members of both councils were ordered to make peace and return home.<sup>69</sup> It remains unclear what Theodosius II meant to accomplish by such a decision. It must have been clear to him that it would please no one and accomplish very little, since not only did it censure the heroes of both parties, but it did not even attempt to provide a solution to the doctrinal issues raised in the controversy.

Meanwhile the Orientals drafted a statement which they were hoping would become the platform for reconciliation. Less than two years later the statement did indeed become the foundation for reconciliation, popularly known as the *Tomos of Reunion*. The author of this statement was Theodoret of Cyrrhus.<sup>70</sup>

In the statement, the Orientals affirmed that Jesus Christ was a true God and true man, consisting of a rational soul and body, that he was born of God the Father before all time as regards his godhead, and born of the Virgin as regards his humanity. Christ was also professed as consubstantial with the Father in

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68 See: Bloomfield Jackson, ed. *The Ecclesiastical History, Dialogues, and Letters of Theodoret*, vol. 3, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, series 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1953), 292, 334–35.; Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*”, 22.

69 Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l’église*. 250–51.; Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*”, 22.

70 Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l’église*. 263.; Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*”, 141–42.; Bardy, “Théodoret,” 300.; Montalverne, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: doctrine and language of the word “inhumanato”* (a. circiter 423–435). 43.

Diepen is among the few scholars who dispute Theodoret’s authorship of both the statement of the Orientals at Ephesus and the *Tomos of Reunion* of AD 433 (Diepen, *Les Trois Chapitres au Concile de Chalcédoine: une étude de l’Anatolie ancienne*. 35.).

However, M. Richard has convincingly refuted Diepen’s argument (Marcel Richard, “À propos d’un ouvrage récent sur le concile de Chalcédoine [Diepen, *Les trois chapitres au Concile de Chalcédoine*],” *Mélanges de science religieuse* 11 (1954): 90.), pointing out that a passage in Theodoret’s Letter 112 (SC 111, 50–51) implies his authorship.

respect to his godhead and consubstantial with us according to his humanity. The two natures, divine and human, are united together (*unio facta est*) and thus one Christ, one Lord, and one Son is acknowledged. Furthermore, on account of this union, the Virgin Mary is rightly called Theotokos.<sup>71</sup>

## 2.6 The Aftermath of the Council of Ephesus (AD 431)

Cyril's party did not accept the conciliatory statement drafted by Theodoret of Cyrrhus and the proceedings at Ephesus came to a halt. Both sides realized that only the emperor could break the deadlock, and they began an intensive diplomatic activity at court to win his favor. The Orientals had ready access to the emperor through Count Irenaeus. However, an influential physician John lobbied extensively for Cyril's cause at court as well. Moreover, Cyril enlisted the help of monks, most notably a certain Abbot Dalmatius, a revered ascetic who broke a vow of enclosure which he had observed for forty-six years and led a group of monks in a rally through the streets of Constantinople. Also, Cyril did not hesitate to use monetary means to secure the favor of officials.<sup>72</sup>

The emperor finally summoned representatives of both parties to come to Chalcedon to settle the issue. The chief spokesperson of Cyril's party was Acacius of Melitene.<sup>73</sup> The chief spokesperson of the Oriental party was Theodoret of Cyrrhus.<sup>74</sup> He testifies that during the five consultations at Chalcedon (Ep. 170),<sup>75</sup> he insisted (Ep. 169) that Cyril's *Twelve Anathemas* be examined, for they were the main obstacle to peace.<sup>76</sup> The long and exhausting summer spent in arguments was taking a toll on the patience of the representatives. In a letter from Chalcedon to the Oriental bishops at Ephesus (Ep. 165

<sup>71</sup> Mansi v, 781ff.; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 93–4.

<sup>72</sup> Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 251–53.; Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 246.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 23.

<sup>73</sup> Besides Acacius, the representatives of Cyril's council were Roman legates, Bishop Arcadius and priest Philip, Juvenal of Jerusalem, Flavian of Philippi, Firmus of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Theodotus of Ancyra, and Euoptyus of Ptolemais (in Africa). See Mansi iv, 1458.

<sup>74</sup> Besides Theodoret, the Oriental interests were represented by John of Antioch, John of Damascus, Himerius of Nicomedia, Paul of Emesa, Macarius of Laodicea, Apringius of Chalcis, and Helladius of Ptolemais (in Phoenicia). See Mansi iv, 1399.

<sup>75</sup> PG 83, 1475–81.

<sup>76</sup> PG 83, 1473–76.

and Ep. 167), Theodoret says that even if Cyril were to deny the *Anathemas*, he would not reestablish communion with him.<sup>77</sup>

It seems, however, that the Cyrillian party refused to discuss the *Anathemas* altogether.<sup>78</sup> This particularly disturbed the Antiochene party, who insisted throughout the conference that the restoration of peace was impossible unless the *Anathemas* were revoked.<sup>79</sup> However, some Christological disputations were held, and according to Theodoret he was successful in refuting the arguments of Acacius of Melitene.<sup>80</sup> As M. Richard pointed out, Acacius was no match for Theodoret's genius.<sup>81</sup>

One episode sheds some light on Theodoret's character and his unquestionable integrity. Theodoret was convinced of the truthfulness of his position and did not hesitate to argue with the emperor if necessary. From the Ep. 169, in which Theodoret gave an account of the progress of the Oriental mission to his metropolitan, Alexander of Hierapolis, we learn of a conversation he had with the emperor:

The very devout emperor knew that the mob was gathered against me. He came to me privately and said: "I know that you are gathering [for Divine Liturgy] without permission." Then, I said: "Since you have allowed me to speak, do me a favor and listen to me. Is it right that heretics, who have been cut off (i.e. excommunicated) are fulfilling their obligation in churches, while I, who am fighting for the faith and for my pains am [now] excluded from communion by others, am not allowed in a church?" He [the emperor] replied, "What am I to do?" I said, "What your representative did at Ephesus. When he discovered that some were gathering [in the church], he prevented them saying, "I will allow neither party to assemble, until you make peace." It would become your devoutness to give directions to the bishop here to forbid both the opposing party and ourselves to assemble before you make your just sentence known to all."

77 PG 83, 1465–66 and PG 83, 1469–71.

78 See Ep. 170 (PG 83, 1475–81 and ACO I, 1, p. 7).

79 Cf. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 101–12.

80 See Ep. 169 (PG 83, 1473–76 and Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Collections conciliaires*. 80–88); Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 254.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 25.

81 Marcel Richard, "Acace de Mélitène, Proclus de Constantinople, et la Grande Arménie," in *Mémorial Louis Pétit, Archives de l'Orient chretien* 1 (Bucharest: Institut français d'étude byzantines: Mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie byzantines, 1948), 402–03.

He [emperor] replied, "It is not my place to order the bishop." Then, I said, "Neither shall you command us and we will take a church and assemble. Your piety will find that there are many more on our side than on theirs . . ." Then, he consented and made no other prohibitions.<sup>82</sup>

In the end the emperor pronounced his sentence in favor of Cyril's party and dismissed representatives of both factions. Theodoret, in exasperation, cried: "But you are not only their emperor; you are ours too."<sup>83</sup> He was not heeded. When Theodosius pronounced his sentence, Nestorius had already been exiled to his native monastery of Euprepis (near Antioch)<sup>84</sup> and Cyril had escaped his imprisonment and was received in Egypt as a hero.<sup>85</sup> The Council of Ephesus was a sweeping political victory for Cyril's party.

On the doctrinal level, however, the situation was far from straightforward. Although Theodosius approved of the decisions of Cyril's synod, recognized Nestorius's deposition, and installed a new archbishop in his stead, he still refused to condemn the Orientals and to accept their depositions and accusations of heresy.<sup>86</sup> In a new edict addressed to Cyril's council, the emperor wrote

As you could not be induced to unite with the Antiochenes, and, moreover, would not join in any discussion of the points of difference, I command that the Oriental bishops return to their churches, and that the Ephesine Synod dissolve. Cyril, too, is to return to Alexandria (to his diocese), and Memnon shall remain bishop of Ephesus. At the same time we also give it to be known that, as long as we live, we shall not condemn the Orientals, for they have not been confuted in our presence, and no one would dispute them. Moreover, if you wish for the peace of the Church (with the Orientals=Antiochenes), that is, if you will still come to an

82 Ep. 169 (PG 83, 1473–76 and Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Collections conciliaires*. 86); ET from NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 341–42.

83 Ep. 168 (NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 340–41 and ACO I, 1, 7, pp. 75–6).

84 Evagrius, HE I, 7. In early September 431, Nestorius requested the emperor's permission to leave Ephesus and return to his monastery. This move was a sign that Nestorius considered his cause to be lost. The edict ordering him to leave Ephesus arrived when the Oriental representatives were on their way to Chalcedon. Thus, the emphasis at the conference at Chalcedon was put on the doctrinal issue. See Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 100.

85 Ep. 167 (PG 83, 1472 AB and ACO I, 1, 7, pp. 74–5); Mansi V, 805; NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 340–41; Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 255.; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 110.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 27.

86 Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 255.

understanding with them at Ephesus, let me know this immediately; if not, then think of your return home. We are not to blame (that no unity was accomplished), but God knows who must share the blame.<sup>87</sup>

An episode which is important for understanding the nature of the conflict took place at the closure of the conference at Chalcedon. Just before their departure from Chalcedon the Oriental representatives met with the Constantinopolitan supporters of Nestorius. Theodoret of Cyrrhus addressed them in a moving pastoral counsel, admonishing them not to succumb to the false teaching about the “suffering of God,” which, for him, was more blasphemous than the teachings of the heathen.<sup>88</sup> As it will become clear from the following chapters, this same notion of the passibility of God will be one of the problems that preoccupied Theodoret’s Christological output for the next twenty years.

John of Antioch, who spoke next, repeated Theodoret’s admonition. In his discourse John emphasized the irrationality of the notion that God was capable of suffering; in Christ the divinity did not suffer, because the two natures are not commingled, but united.<sup>89</sup>

It is evident that for the Orientals the language of Cyril’s *Anathemas* was a dangerous revival not only of Apollinarianism, but also of Arian and Eunomian doctrines. Theodoret expressed the same sentiment in his *Refutation of Cyril’s Twelve Anathemas*.<sup>90</sup> An incident caused by Acacius of Melitene at the conference was the immediate reason for the latter accusation. Theodoret reports that Acacius expressly stated before the emperor that the Godhead was capable of suffering. Theodoret, with unconstrained pleasure, says that the emperor was “so shocked at the enormity of the blasphemy that he flung off his mantle, and stepped back.”<sup>91</sup>

The reason why this particular teaching was perceived as Arian and Eunomian can be summed up by F. Sullivan’s “Arian Syllogism:” God is incapable of suffering, the Logos suffered in Jesus, thus, the Logos is not God.<sup>92</sup> To

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87 The Latin version is published in the *Synodicon* in Mansi v, 805. The Greek text can be found in Mansi IV, 1465; Johannes Baptista Cotelerius, *Ecclesiae graecae monumenta* 1, 41 and ACO I, 1, 7, p. 142. See also Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 110.

88 Mansi IV, 1408 and v, 810.; cf. *Ibid.*, 111.

89 Mansi IV, 1410 and v, 812.; cf. *Ibid.*, 112.

90 Cf. *Refutation of Cyril’s Anathemas* 4 in ACO I, 1, 6, p. 121. ET in István Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, ed. C. Harrison, *The Early Church Fathers* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006). 177.

91 Ep. 164 (NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 336–37).

92 Cf. Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*. 158ff.; Paul B. Clayton, “Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, and the Mystery of the Incarnation in Late Antiochene Christology”



the Orientals this teaching was unacceptable. And, as was evident in their encounter with the supporters of Nestorius from Constantinople, even after their defeat became apparent, the Orientals remained adamant in their Christological tradition.

This resoluteness is manifest also in the fact that on their way home the Orientals assembled at Tarsus in Cilicia in order to regroup and reaffirm their position. Theodoret testifies that at this synod the excommunication of Cyril and his council by the Orientals in Ephesus was confirmed and they were anathematized as heretics.<sup>93</sup> Soon afterwards, another synod was held in Antioch with the same results.<sup>94</sup> The renowned bishop Acacius of Beroea, who exercised great authority as a member of the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 which had condemned Apollinarius, confirmed these decisions.<sup>95</sup>

In the summer months of AD 432 the emperor undertook an initiative for reconciliation by sending letters to both Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch instructing them to meet in private in Nicomedia and come to an understanding.<sup>96</sup> The letter dispatched to Cyril is lost. However, Tillemont speculated that it contained an express directive that Cyril repudiate his *Twelve Anathemas*.<sup>97</sup> His argument is not without justification, since soon after the letter Cyril's attitude towards the *Anathemas* had changed perceptibly. The strong unionist language of the *Anathemas*, which Cyril used to describe the union

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(Union Theological Seminary, 1985), 201.; István Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus's Double Treatise On the Trinity and On the Incarnation: The Antiochene Pathway to Chalcedon* (Koloszvár/Cluj: The Transilvanian District of the Reformed Church in Romania, 2007), 73.

93 Mansi v, 843 and 917. The same is repeated in the letters of Meletius of Mopsuestia to Count Neoterius and the vicar Titus (cf. Mansi v, 920 and 953). Cf. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, 117.

94 Socrates, *HE* 7, 34; Mansi v, 986; cf. *Ibid.*, 118. Clayton argued that present at the council were John of Antioch, Acacius of Beroea, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Macarius of Laodicea, and Alexander of Hierapolis (Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*, 18.).

A small correction is in order here: Clayton says that E. Venables placed this council in Beroea (*ibid.*), while he quite specifically placed the council in Antioch (Edmund Venables, "Alexander of Hierapolis Euphratensis," in *Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature to the End of the Sixth Century A.D., with an Account of the Principal Sects and Heresies.*, ed. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (London: John Murray, 1911), 13.)

95 Mansi v, 819; cf. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, 118.

96 Mansi, v, 287; cf. *Ibid.*, 120.

97 Louis-Sébastien Lenain de Tillemont, *Memoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclesiastique des six premiers siecles. Justifiez par les citations des auteurs originaux: avec des notes pour éclaircir les difficultez des faits & de la chronologie*, vol. 14 (A Venise: chez François Pitteri, dans la Mercerie, à la Fortune Triomphante, 1732), 516.



of the natures in Christ, was replaced by a more guarded terminology.<sup>98</sup> This change is best evidenced in Cyril's response to six Christological propositions composed by Theodoret, which John of Antioch and the Orientals had sent to him as a proposal for theological conciliation. However, Walch and Hefele, have challenged Tillemont's thesis that Cyril was asked to repudiate the *Twelve Anathemas* on the grounds that the emperor regarded Nestorius, and not Cyril, as heretical.<sup>99</sup> Hefele finds further proof in a letter from John of Antioch to his bishops referring to the emperor's propositions for reconciliation as *aperte impiae* (blatantly impious), since Cyril's *Anathemas* had contained incorrect doctrine.<sup>100</sup> However, analysis of Cyril's letters after the imperial communication suggests that Tillemont's thesis is not without merit.

In a letter (Ep. 56) to Acacius of Beroea, Cyril stated that he was unjustly accused of Apollinarianism, Arianism, and other heresies, which he expressly condemned. He paid special attention to disassociating himself from Apollinarianism. Besides condemning it, Cyril explicitly confessed a rational human soul (*anima rationalis*) in Christ.<sup>101</sup> Further, he denounced any mingling or confusion of the natures in Christ, but professed that the Logos in his own nature is incapable of suffering and is unchangeable. It was one and the same Lord Jesus Christ who suffered in the flesh. With regards to his *Anathemas*, he stated that they had strength and power only in opposition to the erroneous teachings of Nestorius. He would write clarifications of them in order to pacify everyone.<sup>102</sup> The reduction of the *deus passus* rhetoric present in the *Anathemas* constitutes a major change in Cyril's Christological narrative.

This letter is further important inasmuch as it contains Cyril's express condemnation of Apollinarius. As McGuckin pointed out, Cyril, in the early years of his episcopate, boasted of fighting against various heresies. He mentions Sabellians, Arians, Manicheans, Adoptionists, but there is no mention of Apollinarians.<sup>103</sup> In fact, before the breakout of the Nestorian controversy

98 See Cyril's letters to Acacius of Melitene, Donatus of Nicopolis, and Rabbulas of Edessa in Mansi v, 309, 347, and 887. Cf. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 122.

99 Christian W.F. Walch, *Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Ketzereien, Spaltungen und Religionsstreitigkeiten bis auf die Zeiten der Reformation* (Hildesheim: Weidmann, 2003). 581.; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 120.

100 Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 120.

101 ACO I, 1, 7, p. 149: "οὐ γὰρ ἄψυχον λέγω τὸ σῶμα Χριστοῦ, ὁμολογῶ δὲ ὅτι ἐψύχωτο ψυχῇ λογικῇ"; Mansi v, 834: "Neque enim inanimatum dico Christi corpus. Confiteor vero quod animatum sit anima rationali."

102 ACO I, 1, 7, p. 147–8 and Mansi v, 831ff.; cf. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, 122.

103 See McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*. 8.; Cyrille d'Alexandrie, *Deux dialogues christologiques*, trans. Georges-Matthieu de Durand, Sources chrétiennes, Vol. 97 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1964). 15.

there is no evidence that Cyril ever challenged the Apollinarians.<sup>104</sup> Thus, this express condemnation of Apollinarius is in all probability a concession to the rising pressure on Cyril to rescind the *Twelve Anathemas*. In this atmosphere, Tillemont's thesis sounds more than probable. John of Antioch's dissatisfaction with the "blatantly impious" proposals of the emperor could be, as Hefele has pointed out, a reference to the imperial demand that the injustice which the Oriental party suffered at Ephesus be put behind them.

Upon receiving Cyril's letter, Acacius of Beroea communicated its contents to Alexander of Hierapolis, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Andrew of Samosata. He was positively inclined towards the change in Cyril's Christological language. Theodoret also agreed that Cyril has indeed mitigated his position and that negotiations for peace could commence.<sup>105</sup> John of Antioch and Andrew of Samosata shared his sentiments.<sup>106</sup> However, other prominent Oriental bishops, Theodoret's metropolitan Alexander of Hierapolis, together with Maximinus of Anazarbus, Helladius of Tarsus, and Euthерius of Tyana, were firmly opposed to any negotiations for peace with Cyril.<sup>107</sup>

Cyril's letter to Acacius containing the explanation of his Christological position marked an important change. Until that moment the doctrinal divergence was seen as the main issue at stake. From that point onward, however, challenges to Cyril's doctrinal position faded away and were replaced by accusations of a gross breach of ecclesiastical discipline evidenced in the proceedings of Ephesus, most notably the deposition of Nestorius.

For the Orientals it was impossible to accept the condemnation and deposition. In a letter to Andrew of Samosata, Theodoret resorted to sophistry, arguing that there is no obstacle to condemning anyone who teaches that Christ was a mere man or anyone who divides Christ into two Sons. However, despite Cyril's best efforts, it would be impossible to associate Nestorius with these teachings.<sup>108</sup> Alexander of Hierapolis emphasized the fact that Nestorius was unjustly condemned *in absentia*, and remained adamant that communion with Cyril must not be restored before he retracted his *Anathemas*.<sup>109</sup>

Despite the continuing enmity between the two parties, Cyril's letter to Acacius of Beroea marks a new era in the post-Ephesine period, and it indeed paved the way to the restoration of communion.

104 McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*. 8.

105 Mansi v, 840; cf. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*, 124.

106 Mansi v, 841; cf. Mansi v, 844; cf. *Ibid.*, 125.

107 See Mansi, v, 844–45 and 850; cf. *Ibid.*, 125–6.

108 Mansi, v, 840.

109 Cf. Mansi v, 831.

Theodoret also played a crucial role in the restoration of communion. He wrote to Helladius of Tarsus and Himerius of Nicomedia exhorting them to look favorably upon the profession of Christology which Cyril had expressed in the letter to Acacius. Theodoret affirmed that in the letter Cyril's Christology was in agreement with that of John of Antioch and the other bishops who assembled in Antioch.<sup>110</sup> However, Alexander of Hierapolis declared himself strongly against reunion with Cyril, even after he was admonished by John of Antioch to view Cyril's new statements with favor. Eutherius of Tyana followed Alexander.<sup>111</sup>

## 2.7 The Tomos of Reunion

In AD 432 John of Antioch succumbed to pressure from the imperial authorities and vigorously sought reconciliation with Cyril. The pressure came as a result of Cyril's energetic diplomatic efforts, about which one reads in the famous letter from his archdeacon Epiphanius to Maximian of Constantinople (whom the Cyrillian party installed as archbishop).<sup>112</sup> It is evident from the letter that Cyril had requested decisive action on the part of the imperial representative Aristolaus. The Antiochenes were to be kept under pressure until it yielded results. Cyril's determination is evident in the extent of his *captatio benevolentiae* of the authorities in Constantinople. Cyril supplemented an extensive correspondence with Pulcheria Augusta, the imperial *praepositus* Paul, the *cubicularius* Romanos, and the *cubiculariae* Marcella and Droseria with very generous gifts, which, according to Epiphanius's testimony, depleted the treasury of the Alexandrian Church. In the same letter, Pulcheria was urged to order John of Antioch to submit to the deposition of Nestorius.<sup>113</sup> Yet the real breakthrough came only after Cyril wrote the mitigating letter to Acacius of Beroea. This letter effectively divided the Orientals, who split into two major

110 Cf. Mansi v, 846; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 127.

111 Mansi v, 850, 853, 855, 916; *ibid.*, 126–29.

112 Mansi v, 938ff.

113 Mansi v, 987–89; The extent of Cyril's determination is evidenced in a lengthy list of bribes offered to officials in Constantinople, which includes, for instance, a reference to fifty pounds of gold sent to one of Pulcheria's *cubiculariae* "ut augustam rogando persuadeat" (See Nestorius, *Le livre d'Héraclide de Damas*. 367–69.; Price, "Marian Piety and the Nestorian Controversy," 33–34.). Hefele unconvincingly argued that the bribes which Cyril sent to the imperial authorities should be excused and explained as being part of the local customs of the time (Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 113 and 34.).

groups: the moderates, headed by John of Antioch and Theodoret, and the hardliners, headed by Alexander of Hierapolis.

Despite the diverging views in the Oriental camp, Paul of Emesa traveled to Alexandria as an envoy carrying a letter from John of Antioch and the Oriental synod of bishops. The letter contained a Christological creed, which was identical in content to the confession of faith which Theodoret of Cyrrhus had composed and presented to the Emperor at Ephesus on behalf of the Oriental council.<sup>114</sup> After much negotiation, Cyril accepted this creed and it became the focal point of the *Tomos of Reunion* which he signed on April 23, 433.<sup>115</sup>

### 2.7.1 *The Content of the Oriental Creed*

The Christological creed consisted of two sections. First, there was an explanation of why it was necessary to provide a deeper clarification of the Nicene creed, which must not be understood as an impertinent attempt to explain a divine mystery. The second section contained a Christological formula, which, following the Nicene creed, confessed Jesus Christ as the only-begotten Son of God, true God and true man, consisting of a reasonable soul and body, who *qua* God was born of the Father before time and *qua* human being was born of the Virgin. The two natures, divine and human, are united together in such a manner that one Christ, one Lord, one Son is confessed. In the union the natures are not commingled. On account of this union, the Blessed Virgin is acknowledged as Theotokos (Birthgiver of God), since of her the Logos took on flesh and became man. As regards the evangelical and prophetic attributes of Christ, some refer to the Godhead only and some to humanity.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Mansi v, 291, 303; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 129–30.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 134–38. Tillemont argued that the union was effected in March (Lenain de Tillemont, *Memoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclesiastique des six premiers siecles. Justifiez par les citations des auteurs originaux: avec des notes pour éclaircir les difficultez des faits & de la chronologie*. 547.).

<sup>116</sup> ACO I, 1, 8, p. 103. Cf. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 130–31. Mansi v, 305: “Ὁμολογοῦμεν τοιγαροῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸν μονογενῆ, Θεὸν τέλειον καὶ ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος· πρὸ αἰώνων μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν τὸν αὐτὸν δι’ ἡμᾶς καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα· ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ τὸν αὐτὸν κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, καὶ ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα· δύο γὰρ φύσεων ἕνωσις γέγονε· διὸ ἓνα Χριστόν, ἓνα υἱόν, ἓνα κύριον ὁμολογοῦμεν· κατὰ ταύτην τὴν τῆς ἀσυγχύτου ἐνώσεως ἔννοιαν ὁμολογοῦμεν τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον θεοτόκον, διὰ τὸ τὸν Θεὸν Λόγον σαρκωθῆναι καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαι, καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς συλλήψεως ἐνώσαι· ἐαυτῷ τὸν ἐξ αὐτῆς ληφθέντα ναόν· τὰς δὲ εὐαγγελικὰς καὶ ἀποστολικὰς περὶ τοῦ κυρίου φωνὰς ἴσμεν τοὺς θεολόγους ἄνδρας τὰς μὲν κοινοποιοῦντας, ὡς ἐφ’ ἑνὸς προσώπου, τὰς δὲ διαιροῦντας, ὡς ἐπὶ δύο φύσεων· καὶ τὰς

Although the creed was phrased in a manner acceptable to both Orientals and Cyril, in its essence it was a statement of Antiochene Christology, with its unambiguous parallel structure in Christ (full divinity and full humanity, including rational soul and body).<sup>117</sup> This is most evident in the last sentence of its Christological creed, where the predications of Jesus are not always attributed to both natures.

The creed does accept the term Theotokos from the outset, but the term is acceptable on account of the union-without-comingling of the two natures (δύο γὰρ φύσεων ἔνωσις γέγονε· διὸ ἓνα Χριστὸν, ἓνα υἱὸν, ἓνα κύριον ὁμολογοῦμεν· κατὰ ταύτην τὴν τῆς ἀσυγχύτου ἐνώσεως ἔννοιαν ὁμολογοῦμεν τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον θεοτόκον). After all, the term itself did not present a fundamental obstacle to the Orientals. As has been mentioned above, John of Antioch, in his letter to Nestorius from late November AD 430, testified that the Orientals had no essential objection to it.<sup>118</sup> Even Nestorius accepted it, with proper qualifications.<sup>119</sup>

Christ is defined as “perfect God and perfect man, of a rational soul and body” (Θεὸν τέλειον καὶ ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος). As Stewardson observed, this expression leans towards Antiochene terminology, since Cyril preferred more generic terms about the humanity of Christ.<sup>120</sup> However, as von Harnack observed, Cyril accepted it because it effectively dissociated him from Apollinarianism.<sup>121</sup>

The creed masterfully proceeds by using the ideas and theological language of the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan creed: Christ is born of the Father and is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) with Him according to divinity. Christ is also born of the Virgin Mary and is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) with us according to humanity. Regarding the coming together of the natures, however, the creed used a very general expression: “the union of the natures took place” (δύο γὰρ φύσεων ἔνωσις γέγονε).

Stewardson argued that the expression was a masterly evasion of Cyril’s battle-cry “one nature” (μία φύσις), which was a strong term for oneness in

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μέν θεοπρεπεῖς κατὰ τὴν θεότητα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τὰς δὲ ταπεινὰς κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα αὐτοῦ παραδιδόντας.” (Greek text of the creed was sent to both Cyril of Alexandria and Xystus of Rome, ACO I, 1, 7, p. 159).

117 Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*”, 36. See also von Harnack, *History of Dogma*. 265–67.; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 35–36.

118 ACO I, 1, 1, 96; Conc. Eph. I. c. 25 in Mansi IV, 1061–68; (also, see above, Section 1.3).

119 ACO I, 4, 7.

120 Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*”, 36.

121 von Harnack, *History of Dogma*. 175–77.

Christ—much stronger than Nestorius's *συνάφεια*.<sup>122</sup> However, the expression used in the *Tomos* is actually a generic term for bodies coming together. The term *συνάφεια* is a general type of union of two distinct bodies. Although it leaves much to be desired in terms of Christological accuracy, *συνάφεια* is still a more precise term than the one found in the creed. Yet the creed made an important qualification of the union—it is a union-without-commingling of the constituent parts. An appropriate term for this definition of the union would be *συνάφεια*, which comes from the Oriental milieu. The term can be traced back to the period before the Nestorian controversy. In the *Expositio Rectae Fidei*, Theodoret used the term in a Trinitarian context to denote the union in substance of the persons of the Holy Trinity.<sup>123</sup> For Theodoret, this union is the closest possible and is inseparable, yet does not involve confusion of the constituent parts.<sup>124</sup> Thus, Stewardson's observation about the term is correct only with regards to the politics—the statement of the creed regarding the union of the natures in Christ is a masterful solution of a politically sensitive area of Christology. However, the term *ἕνωσις* is even more ambiguous than the imprecise term *συνάφεια*.<sup>125</sup>

There is little doubt that Theodoret of Cyrrhus was the main theological mind behind the Christological creed found in the letter of John of Antioch and the Orientals.<sup>126</sup> Yet some of his concerns expressed earlier in the controversy

122 Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 37.

123 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio Rectae Fidei* 5, ("And behold the utter unity (*ἄρα συνάφειας*) into which he places the marks of distinction [of the persons] . . .").

124 Theodoret, *Expositio Rectae Fidei* 5, ("... the indivisible notion (*ἀχώριστον* ... *ἕνωσιν*) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit").

125 To declare that there was a "union" between two entities was a rather vague statement. In terms of Christological debates about the nature of the union of the divine and human natures of Christ, such a statement was inadequate, for there were at least four different types of union which the ancient Stoics had recognized, ranging from a peripheral union of proximity of two dry bodies to full commingling which results in the creation of *tertium quid*. For further discussion see Joannes Stobaeus, *Eclog.* 1, 374; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De mixtione* 142A. See also Eduard Zeller, *The Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, trans. Oswald E. Reichel (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892). 137, n. 1; Luise Abramowski, *Drei christologische Untersuchungen*, ed. E. Lohse, vol. 45, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1981). 79–80.

126 As H. Chadwick convincingly argued, Theodoret's authorship of the creed is attested in a letter from John of Antioch to Theodoret preserved in the *Collectio Cassiensis* (*Epistle* 210 in ACO 1, 4, 153). He also sees an early draft of the creed in Theodoret's *Epistle* 151 (SC 429, 96–128) to the monks of the East. See Henry Chadwick, "Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 2 (1951): 147, n. 2.; See also

are not attested to in this creed. At the beginning of the controversy, in the *Refutation of Cyril's Twelve Anathemas*, Theodoret expressed a fear that Cyril's *hypostatic union* (ὑποστατικὴ ἔνωσις) of the two natures of Christ was advocating their commingling (χρᾶσις) so as to create a *tertium quid*.<sup>127</sup> Such a union was unacceptable, since it would result in Christ being neither God nor man. Thus, one would expect a more precise definition of the union on Theodoret's part. Although a term specifying the type of the union had not been used immediately, still the Orientals's aim of safeguarding the union against interpretations of commingling of the natures was accomplished effectively. In the section on the term Theotokos, the creed allows its use on account of the union-without-confusion that took place in Christ.<sup>128</sup> The lack of precision in the immediate definition of the union of natures in the creed should be attributed to its conciliatory nature. Its main concern was to establish the lowest common denominator between Cyril's Christology and that of the Orientals, which would then serve as a platform for reconciliation.

By way of conclusion, it must be mentioned that the overall nature of the creed was not a rectification of the Christological teaching of either side, but a reconciliation. However, it was still a sweeping theological victory for the Antiochene Christological system, notwithstanding the political victory of Cyril's party.

### 2.7.2 *The Reunion of AD 433*

When the Antiochene emissary, bishop Paul of Emesa, presented the letter containing the creed to Cyril of Alexandria, the latter rejected it, demanding that Nestorius should be condemned and that the Orientals should agree to his deposition.<sup>129</sup> It is interesting to note that Cyril did not complain about the Christological content of the *Tomos*. At this point, he was concerned mostly with the political side of the controversy—the deposition of Nestorius. The formal reconciliation was finalized only after the Orientals accepted it. Only then did Cyril assent to signing the Oriental Christological creed.

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Bright, *The Age of the Fathers: Chapters in the History of the Church during the Fourth and Fifth Centuries*. 338.; László Vanyó, *Az ókeresztény egyház és irodalma (The Early Church and Its Literature)* (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1988). 689.; Mandac, "L'Union christologique dans les oeuvres de Théodoret antérieurs au concile d'Éphèse," 64–96.

127 *Refutation of Cyril's Second Anathema* in ACO I, 1, 6, p. 114.

128 Mansi v, 305: "κατὰ ταύτην τὴν τῆς ἀσυγχύτου ἔννοιαν [τῆς ἐνώσεως] ὁμολογοῦμεν τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον θεοτόκον."

129 Cyril testifies to this in his epistles to Acacius of Melitene (Mansi v, 311) and Donatus (Mansi v, 350).



Thus in the best tradition of the Byzantine art of negotiation, both sides were satisfied with the outcome and the victory was shared. The theological victory belonged to the Orientals, since the *Tomos* contained all the essential tenets of the Antiochene Christological system. Through the use of pure Antiochene terminology it preserved the fullness of Christ's humanity. The *Tomos* even made the term *πρόσωπον* acceptable for the description of the subject of the union of natures. While the Antiochenes rejoiced in the theological victory, Cyril enjoyed the political victory: Nestorius was finally deposed, though he was still able to justify his adherence to the Antiochene Christology of the *Tomos*.

## 2.8 Hostility Continues: The Christological Debate from AD 434 to 444

The union faced opposition from both sides. Cyril's former colleagues, most notably Isidore of Pelusium, Acacius of Melitene, and Valerian of Iconium, accused him of betraying the true faith.<sup>130</sup> John of Antioch encountered criticism on two fronts: the hardliners accused him of condoning Apollinarianism,<sup>131</sup> and Theodoret and the moderates accused him of committing a gross breach of ecclesiastical discipline by accepting the deposition of Nestorius.

After John of Antioch communicated Cyril's acceptance of the Orientals's Christological creed, Theodoret dropped his accusations of Apollinarianism against Cyril. His attention was captivated by the case of Nestorius, whom, as mentioned above, he held to be unjustly accused and condemned for something he did not teach. Naturally, for Theodoret, Nestorius's deposition and condemnation was unacceptable, but he expressed his view in a veiled way, requesting of John of Antioch that all the bishops deposed in the controversy be restored, or the peace would be null.<sup>132</sup>

Soon Theodoret convoked a synod at Zeugma, at which Andrew of Samosata and John of Germanicia were present, while Alexander of Hierapolis declined to take part. The synod accepted Cyril's orthodoxy as professed in the acceptance of the Oriental Christological creed, and recognized in it a recantation of

130 Isidore of Pelusium, *Epp.* 1, 324, 419 and 429 (PG 78, 416C and 451C); Liberatus, *Breviar.* c. 8, p. 66g; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 139–40.

131 Besides Alexander of Hierapolis, the Reunion was vigorously opposed by the bishops of the two Cilicias, Cappadocia Secunda, Bithynia, Thessaly, and Moesia. See Mansi v, 874 and 893; *ibid.*, 146–48.

132 Mansi v, 868.



the *Twelve Anathemas*. The synod asserted allegiance to Nestorius's innocence and rejected any possibility of accepting his deposition. It was decided that a union would be possible upon the restoration of all the deposed bishops.<sup>133</sup> In a personal letter to Nestorius, Theodoret explained the proceedings of the Synod and informed him that Cyril was now beyond suspicion of heresy. He reaffirmed his belief that Nestorius was likewise orthodox and vowed to never forsake his friend, saying that he would rather lose both his hands than accept his deposition.<sup>134</sup> Thus, at the Synod of Zeugma Theodoret became *de facto* head of a new party among the Orientals: he refused communion to Cyril and John on the grounds that they breached the sacred canonical order with respect to Nestorius, while he refused to side with the hardliners led by Alexander of Hierapolis, who now unjustly accused Cyril of heresy.

John of Antioch was very displeased at this dissent in his patriarchate. He resorted to coercion in order to restore peace among the Orientals. In this he enlisted the help of the imperial authorities.<sup>135</sup> The coercion yielded results and the majority of bishops returned to communion with the archbishop, thus accepting formally the Reunion with Cyril of Alexandria. However, Theodoret remained obstinate in the schism. His reasons were not doctrinal, but disciplinary. In a letter to Meletius of Neocaesarea, Theodoret complained that John of Antioch appointed diocesan bishops in metropolitan dioceses in contravention of canon law, thereby infringing on the exclusive prerogatives of the metropolitans. Moreover, the candidates were deemed morally unworthy.<sup>136</sup> However, Theodoret was reconciled with John of Antioch after famous monks from his diocese, Symeon the Stylite, Jacob of Nisibis, and Bardatus, urged him to hold a conference with the archbishop.<sup>137</sup> After Theodoret ascertained the orthodoxy of John of Antioch and his intention to restore peace, and after he received assurances that Nestorius's condemnation would not be required of him, he restored communion.

133 Mansi v, 876; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 146–47.

134 Theodoret, *Ep.* 172 (the letter is extant in one Syriac and three Latin versions *Lettre* 23a–c in SC 429, 251–59); Mansi v, 898; Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Collections conciliaires*. 251–59.; Martin Parmentier, “A Letter from Theodoret of Cyrus to the Exiled Nestorius (CPG 6270) in a Syriac Version,” *Bijdragen. Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 51 (1990): 234.; Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus's Double Treatise On the Trinity and On the Incarnation: The Antiochene Pathway to Chalcedon*. 19.; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 147. See also Guinot, “La réception antiochienne des écrits de Cyrille d’Alexandrie d’après le témoignage de Théodoret de Cyr,” 263.

135 Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 150.

136 Mansi v, 907, 908, 912, 914; *ibid.*

137 Mansi v, 925; *ibid.*, 151.

Theodoret made this concession mostly because of his pastoral consideration for his people. He was unmoved by the threats of deposition made by the imperial representatives. As a matter of fact, he laughed at them.<sup>138</sup> However, as Venables says, Theodoret was attacked on “his tenderest side:” as retaliation for his obstinacy, the imperial authorities imposed heavy taxation on his diocese and a mob incited by the authorities even tried to set fire to Theodoret’s basilica.<sup>139</sup>

### 2.8.1 *The Controversy over Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia*

Theodoret’s reconciliation with John of Antioch automatically implied his restoration of communion with Cyril of Alexandria. According to Theodoret, all the hostilities ceased between them and they even exchanged friendly letters concerning Julian the Apostate’s opposition to Christianity.<sup>140</sup> However, Cyril broke the truce a mere three years later by openly attacking the Christological teaching of revered theologians from the Antiochene milieu, Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Theodoret, who reserved great admiration for the two, passionately challenged Cyril’s attacks in writing. The peace between them, broken at this time, was never restored.<sup>141</sup>

138 In a special letter to Theodoret, the count and vicar Titus informed him that unless he restored communion with John of Antioch he would be deposed. The same letter was communicated to the famous monks of Theodoret’s diocese Simeon the Stylite, Jacob of Nisibis, and Bardatus. Only after they pleaded with him, and after the people of his diocese implored him not to leave them did Theodoret begin to seriously consider reconciliation with John of Antioch. See Mansi v, 925, c. 146; *ibid.*

139 Venables, “Alexander of Hierapolis Euphratensis,” 911; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*, 19.

140 See Theodoret’s Ep. 83 (Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm. 1–95*, 216–17.); Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*, 19.; Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*”, 69.

141 Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*, 21. Stewardson, however, argued on the basis of Theodoret’s Ep. 83 to Dioscorus (Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm. 1–95*, 216–17.) that it was only after the controversy over Diodore and Theodore had been settled that Theodoret formally restored peace with Cyril, at which point he engaged in a friendly correspondence with him (Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*”, 69 and 156 (note 234).). However, Cyril’s work *Against Julian the Apostate* cannot be dated precisely. Based on Theodoret’s evidence (Ep. 83), Quasten argued that the work must have been written between AD 433 and 441 (Johannes Quasten, *Patrology: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the*

Following the Reunion of AD 433, Cyril was obliged to defend himself from the attacks of his confederates from Ephesus, who accused him of deserting orthodoxy. Even his spiritual advisor, Isidore of Pelusium, advanced such accusations.<sup>142</sup> Cyril was obliged to defend the constancy of his Christology by arguing that only his terminology had changed, while his Christology remained the same.<sup>143</sup> In one of his defensive letters (*Ep.* 45), Cyril accused Diodore of Tarsus of being Nestorius's theological ancestor.<sup>144</sup> This open attack on Diodore, a master theologian of the Antiochene milieu and one of the "pillars of orthodoxy" endorsed by the Council of Constantinople in AD 381, was prompted by the attack on Theodore of Mopsuestia by Rabbula of Edessa,

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*Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 3 (Utrecht/Antwerp and Westminster, MD: Spectrum Publishers and the Newman Press, 1960). 130.). Other scholars argued for even earlier dates; namely, the P. Burguière and P. Éviex argue for a date before AD 429, while M. Vinzent dates the work even earlier, to AD 423–26 (Cyrille d'Alexandrie, *Contre Julien: Livres I et II*, ed. Paul Burguière and Pierre Éviex, vol. 1, Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1985). 15. and Markus Vinzent, "Halbe Heiden—Doppelte Christen. Die Festbriefe Kyrills von Alexandrien und die Datierung seines Werkes Contra Iulianum," in *Christen und Nichtchristen in Spätantike, Neuzeit und Gegenwart. Beginn und Ende des Konstantinischen Zeitalters. Internationales Forschungskolloquium aus Anlass des 65. Geburtstags von Adolf Martin Ritter*, ed. Angelika Dörfler-Dierken, Wolfram Kinzig, and Markus Vinzent, *Texts and Studies in the History of Theology* (Mandelbachtal and Cambridge: Edition Cicero, 2001), 41–60.).

It is not clear on what grounds Stewardson believed that the truce between Theodoret and Cyril took place after the controversy over Diodore and Theodore had subsided. In view of the intensity of Theodoret's reply to Cyril's attack on the two theologians, Venables's dating of the peace to before the outbreak of the controversy is more convincing (Edmund Venables, "Theodoretus, Bishop of Cyrrhus," in *Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature to the End of the Sixth Century A.D., with an Account of the Principal Sects and Heresies.*, ed. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (London: John Murray, 1911), 960.).

142 Isidorus Pelusiota, Liber I, *Epp.* 419 and 496 (PG 78, 416C and 451C).

143 Ep. 41 to Acacius of Melitene in ACO 1.1.4. pp. 40–48; Ep. 44 to Eulogius in ACO 1.1.4. pp. 35–37, and Epp. 45 and 46 to Succensus in ACO 1.1.6. pp. 151–62. ET in: Cyril of Alexandria, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters*, trans. Lionel R. Wickham, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983). pp. 40–8 (to Meletius), pp. 62–9 (to Eulogius), and pp. 70–93 (to Succensus). A brief but useful discussion of the letters is found in John Behr, *The Case Against Diodore and Theodore*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, upcoming 2011). [My profound gratitude goes to the V. Rev. Prof. John Behr for generously sharing with me an early version of his then unpublished work on the topic.]

144 ACO 1.1.6. pp. 151–52.

Cyril's confederate.<sup>145</sup> As Theodore's teacher, Diodore was a collateral victim of the vicious attacks against his disciple.

In the year following the Council of Ephesus, Rabbula of Edessa waged war on Theodore of Mopsuestia, accusing him of heresy.<sup>146</sup> In AD 432, he wrote to Cyril arguing that Theodore was the true father of Nestorianism.<sup>147</sup> As Ibas of Edessa, who was an Edessan presbyter at the time and an eyewitness, wrote in a letter to Mari of Persia, Rabbula went as far as to pronounce anathema on Theodore in church.<sup>148</sup>

Rabbula's accusations soon met fierce opposition from the Cilician bishops, who pointed out that he was attacking Theodore out of personal spite.<sup>149</sup> Naturally, they were defending their greatly honored metropolitan (Mopsuestia was the metropolitanate see of Cilicia), who had died a few years before in AD 428. However, Proclus of Constantinople, in a letter about the issue which the Armenian Church solicited from him, wrote decisively against "Theodore's errors."<sup>150</sup>

The controversy lasted for several years. It escalated only in AD 438 after Cyril directed an indignant letter to John of Antioch complaining that, while he was visiting Jerusalem, a certain presbyter Daniel had informed him that Theodoret of Cyrrhus boasted of not having subscribed to the condemnation

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145 Cf. *Codex Theodosianus* XVI. 1. 3; Quasten, *Patrology: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*. 397.; Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary on the Psalms 1–51*, ed. Writings from the Greco-Roman World, trans. Robert C. Hill (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005). xi.; Andrew Louth, "John Chrysostom and the Antiochene School to Theodoret of Cyrrhus," in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frances Young, Lewis Ayres, and Andrew Louth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 343.

146 Behr dates the famous letter of Ibas of Edessa to Mari of Persia which describes the beginning of Rabbula of Edessa's attack on Theodore and Diodore to AD 433 (*The Case Against Diodore and Theodore*. 48.).

147 Mansi V, 421; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 154.

148 Mansi VII, 241; *ibid*.

149 *Ibid*.

150 Proclus of Constantinople wrote a letter to the Armenian bishops which came to be known as *Tomos to the Armenians*, in which he condemned a certain collection of excerpts from the works of Theodore of Mopsuestia (cf. ACO 4. 2. p. 68). However, Ibas of Edessa wrote in defense of Theodore and the anthology of his writings, which he even translated into Syriac (cf. ACO 4. 1. p. 112). Proclus then wrote to John of Antioch requesting that all the Oriental bishops endorse the *Tomos* and that the anthology be condemned (cf. ACO 1. 5. p. 311). See also Mansi V, 421; Behr, *The Case Against Diodore and Theodore*. 51–52.; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 154.

of Nestorius and not having accepted his deposition.<sup>151</sup> He further complained that, while traveling to Jerusalem, he had been informed that certain crypto-Nestorians were circulating the writings of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia in defense of Nestorius's doctrines. He demanded that John act swiftly and condemn the "impious doctrines" of Diodore and Theodore.<sup>152</sup> John, however, held a council at Antioch, which confirmed its allegiance to Theodore. John then stood in unambiguous defense of Theodore, as is attested in a number of his letters.<sup>153</sup> The Orientals pointed out that:

Theodore did indeed speak of 'a certain great distinction' regarding the natures of Christ, but did so in order to combat his Arian opponents, 'deciding to use that mode of expression more efficaciously against the heretics'; he divided the properties of the natures more fully to fight the battle as it had been dictated by his opponents, yet his works are also full of expressions relating to the 'total unity' of the natures.<sup>154</sup>

Cyril, however, decided to compose a refutation of the Christology of Diodore and Theodore, which he did in three books titled *Against Diodore and Theodore*.<sup>155</sup> In the first book he compiled a number of Diodore's sayings and denounced them as erroneous. The other two books were dedicated to Theodore of Mopsuestia and had the same format.<sup>156</sup>

Theodoret of Cyrrhus vehemently countered Cyril's attack in his work *In Defense of Diodore and Theodore*. It survives in fragments in the acts of the Council of Constantinople of AD 553, which condemned Theodoret's writings

151 The letter is preserved in Theodoret's corpus as number 179, but is actually Cyril's *Epistula* 63 in PG 77, 327B–328D. See Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 155.; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 21.).

152 Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 155.; Venables, "Theodoretus, Bishop of Cyrrhus," 960.; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 20.

153 Mansi v, 1182, 1183, 1185; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 155.

154 Cyril of Alexandria, Ep. 66.8 (ACO 1.5. p. 313) and Facundus, *Pro defensione trium capitulorum concilii chalcedonensis libri XII ad Iustinianum Imperatorem* 8.1.3–7 (PL 67, 709C–712C); Behr, *The Case Against Diodore and Theodore*. 51–52.

155 PG 76, 1437–52.

156 Cyril Ep. 69. 4; Behr, *The Case Against Diodore and Theodore*. 52.

against Cyril.<sup>157</sup> The work was designed to counter Cyril's florilegia with other selections from Diodore and Theodore, with the purpose of proving their orthodoxy.<sup>158</sup> As Pásztori-Kupán has argued, Cyril's attack on Diodore and Theodore was a "mere act of self-compensation," since some of his followers had begun to regard his approval of the *Tomos of Reunion* as an act of capitulation to the Orientals and Nestorianism.<sup>159</sup> Theodoret was theologically justified in defending them. As mentioned above, Diodore was a highly revered father at the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 and was proclaimed a pillar of orthodoxy, one of the fathers with whom bishops were obliged to retain communion in order to be considered orthodox. Thus, Cyril's attack on Diodore implicitly meant an attack on the ecumenical Council of Constantinople.<sup>160</sup> This was the council that condemned Apollinarianism. Given that Cyril had been suspected of Apollinarianism, Theodoret's reaction and defense of Diodore was fully warranted.

The emperor learned of the new escalation of the controversy and, in a letter to John, he ordered the perpetuation of peace of the church and expressly forbade that "men who died in the communion of the church should be calumniated."<sup>161</sup> An intense diplomatic correspondence between Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople ensued, which ended in the Oriental bishops accepting the *Tomos*, while Cyril and Proclus, having met with strong and determined opposition, decided not to press the matter further and seek condemnation of Theodore and Diodore.<sup>162</sup>

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157 For the text of the fragments see Mansi IX, 252–54; Johannes Flemming, *Akten der Ephesinischen Synode vom Jahre 449: Syrisch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970). 105–07.; Luise Abramowski, "Reste von Theodorets Apologie für Diodor und Theodor bei Facundus," in *Studia Patristica* 1, ed. K. Aland and F.L. Cross, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957).; Luise Abramowski, "Der Streit um Diodor und Theodor zwischen den ephesinischen Konzilien," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 67 (1955–56): 252–87.; Marcel Richard, "Proclus de Constantinople et le theopaschisme," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 38 (1942).

158 Behr, *The Case Against Diodore and Theodore*. 53.

159 Theresa Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: The Bishop and the Holy Man* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002). 26.; Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus's Double Treatise On the Trinity and On the Incarnation: The Antiochene Pathway to Chalcedon*. 20.

160 Cf. Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus's Double Treatise On the Trinity and On the Incarnation: The Antiochene Pathway to Chalcedon*. 20.

161 Mansi V, 1009, c. 109; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 155.

162 Cyril, Ep. 72 in ACO 4. 1. pp. 105–6 and Facundus, *Pro def.* 8. 2. 2–3; Behr, *The Case Against Diodore and Theodore*. 53.

It is interesting to note that there is a pattern of change and compromise in Cyril's theological concerns. Cyril had strongly opposed the theology of Diodore and Theodore. Yet after he met fervent opposition from both Theodoret, who spearheaded the opposition of the Oriental synod through his writings, and the emperor Theodosius II, who demanded the preservation of peace, Cyril expressly stated in a letter to Proclus of Constantinople that Theodore should not be anathematized.<sup>163</sup> The same dynamic is in evidence in the events following the Council of Ephesus in AD 431. Cyril insisted on the theological condemnation and the deposition of Nestorius, but finally settled for the *status quo*. Not all Orientals formally accepted the deposition. Theodoret, for instance, firmly refused to condone the injustice done to Nestorius at Ephesus.<sup>164</sup> He was convinced of Nestorius's innocence as regards theology. Consequently, he could not subscribe to his deposition. Further, after Cyril was informed of Theodoret's obstinacy, he demanded a new resolution from the Orientals, but he again suspended his attacks after John of Antioch flatly refused new tests.

Thus, the image of Cyril of Alexandria as the unchallenged victor in the Nestorian controversy is not entirely warranted by the historical evidence. While Cyril dominated the political stage in the controversy, the theological aspect of the controversy necessitated negotiations and compromise. Cyril's theological concerns were largely informed by his ecclesial politics, as evidenced in his toleration of Theodoret's refusal to accept either the deposition of Nestorius, or the condemnation of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia.

The resolution of the Nestorian controversy was an ongoing and complicated affair. The deaths of John of Antioch in AD 441 and Cyril of Alexandria in AD 444 only closed a chapter of the controversy, but did not bring it to an end.

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<sup>163</sup> Cyril *Ep.* 72 (ACO 4. 1. pp. 109–10).

<sup>164</sup> Theodoret restored the peace with John of Antioch upon learning that he had not anathematized Nestorius as a person but had made a very generalized condemnation of whatever was in opposition to the apostolic teaching in his theology. As both Baluze and Venables argue convincingly, Theodoret was not required to subscribe to Nestorius's condemnation (Etienne Baluze, ed. *Nova Collectio Conciliorum*, vol. 1 (Parisiis: ex officina typographica Francisci Mvge, 1683), 834–36.; Edmund Venables, "Joannes, Bishop of Antioch," in *Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature to the End of the Sixth Century A.D., with an Account of the Principal Sects and Heresies.*, ed. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (London: John Murray, 1911), 1000.). Theodoret's refusal to condemn Nestorius officially caused much damage to his reputation. At the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451 he was accused of heresy and forced under threat of excommunication to anathematize Nestorius. He tried to avoid it with much sophistry, but at the end consented to it.



## 2.9 The Miaphysite Controversy

Theodoret renewed the Christological debate in AD 447 after the main participants in the Nestorian controversy had left the scene. Proclus of Constantinople had died in AD 446 and was succeeded by the mild-mannered Flavian.<sup>165</sup> Unlike his predecessor, Flavian seems to have been reluctant to delve into Christological controversies, for he hesitated to begin proceedings against a powerful archimandrite, Eutyches,<sup>166</sup> on the charge of heresy brought against him before the Resident Synod in AD 448 by the renowned heresy hunter Eusebius of Dorylaeum.

The same could not be said about Cyril's nephew and successor Dioscorus, who was displeased at the ecclesiastical politics of his great predecessor and uncle. Dioscorus was opposed to the settlement of AD 433 between Antioch and Alexandria, considering it a capitulation to Nestorianism. His theological persuasion coupled with political aspirations and his fiery character brought about a new Christological controversy.<sup>167</sup> However, credit for the revival of the Christological debate belongs to Theodoret of Cyrrhus.

Following the death of John of Antioch in AD 441, Theodoret came to prominence as the most important theological factor in the Antiochene milieu.<sup>168</sup> The death of Cyril of Alexandria in AD 444 provided an opportunity for Theodoret finally to promote the Antiochene Christology of dual natures in Christ and rectify the damage that the reputation of Antioch had suffered

<sup>165</sup> Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: The Bishop and the Holy Man*. 26.

<sup>166</sup> Following the death of Archimandrite Dalmatius in the early 440s, Eutyches, Abbot of the monastery of Job in Constantinople, rose to prominence. He was a powerful monastic authority in Constantinople and a staunch ally of Cyril during the Nestorian controversy.

<sup>167</sup> E. Venables aptly described Dioscorus as a "violent, rapacious, unscrupulous, and scandalously immoral man, whose profuse bribes had secured the favour of the imperial court, and especially of Chrysaphius the reigning eunuch, who held sway over the feeble mind of Theodosius" (Venables, "Theodoretus, Bishop of Cyrrhus," 912.).

<sup>168</sup> John's successor Domnus was an intelligent but ineffective man. He relied entirely on Theodoret's authoritative advice. B.J. Kidd rightly calls Theodoret the "facile princeps among theologians of the Eastern Empire." (Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 281.). The same sentiment is echoed by L. Duchesne (Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 273–74.), R.V. Sellers (Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey*. 34 and 44.), and J.L. Stewardson (Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 70–71.). See also Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, ed. H. de Lubac and J. Daniélou, trans. Y. Azéma, vol. 1, Sources chrétiennes, Vol. 40 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1955). 20.; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 22.



in the aftermath of the Council of Ephesus. Dioscorus of Alexandria was the greatest exponent of the extreme wing of the Alexandrine party. Bearing in mind that the archbishop of Alexandria enjoyed an enormous influence at the court of Theodosius, one may be inclined to agree with H.-G. Opitz's description of Theodoret as a theologian unskilled in diplomacy, who saw only the theological aspect of the controversies he was involved in.<sup>169</sup> However, a more careful analysis of Theodoret's actions reveals a coordinated and well-planned sequence of events which resulted in the restoration of the Christological preeminence of his theological milieu at the general Council of Chalcedon in AD 451.

Theodoret had learned a valuable lesson in ecclesiastical diplomacy from Cyril of Alexandria. Cyril began his attack on Antiochene Christology and its most illustrious exponent, Theodore of Mopsuestia, only after the latter's death in AD 428. Coincidentally, Theodore of Mopsuestia happened to be the most authoritative theologian of the Antiochene milieu and such an attack during his lifetime was inconceivable. Thus, only after the great authorities from the Nestorian controversy had left the scene (i.e., Cyril of Alexandria, John of Antioch, Proclus of Constantinople, and Celestine of Rome) was Theodoret able to restore preeminence to the Antiochene Christological system.<sup>170</sup>

Theodoret had realized that if the Christological debate was to be brought to a close, another general council was necessary. Indeed, given the growing power of the Alexandrian party, a council was rather urgent. In this situation it was pertinent to have as many allies as possible in episcopal sees with a full vote. Together with Domnus of Antioch he endeavored to place strong and loyal exponents of Antiochene Christology in the important vacant episcopal sees of Antarados, Emesa, and Tyre.<sup>171</sup> At his insistence, Count Irenaeus,

169 Opitz, "Theodoretos von Kyros," 1794. Stewardson echoes the same sentiment: Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 77.

170 J.-N. Guinot in his analysis of the origin and dynamics of the Nestorian controversy points out that Theodoret wisely abstained from *ad hominem* attacks on Cyril, which Nestorius advanced copiously. Nonetheless, Theodoret's criticisms of Cyril's Christology were equally serious. Yet, throughout his exchange with Cyril, Theodoret remained aware of the power that the Archbishop of Alexandria wielded. (Guinot, "La réception antiochienne des écrits de Cyrille d'Alexandrie d'après le témoignage de Théodoret de Cyr," 225–39, esp. 37.).

171 E. Schwartz, *Der Prozess des Eutyches*, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Abteilung. Sitzungsberichte. Jg. 1929, Heft 5 (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: In Kommission des Verlag Oldenbourg, 1929). 57.; Opitz, "Theodoretos von Kyros," col. 1793.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 77.

a friend and ally of the Oriental cause at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431, was consecrated bishop of Tyre (c. AD 442).<sup>172</sup> All of Theodoret's actions point to a well-planned scheme, whose final touch was the writing of the *Eranistes*.

Exploiting the theological vacuum created by the death of all the authorities from the previous controversy, Theodoret wrote a work titled *Eranistes*, which translates as "beggar." It is a polemical work, written in the form of a dialogue between an "orthodox" person and a heretical antihero.<sup>173</sup> Theodoret named the latter "beggar," indicating that his heresy was a conflation of various heretical systems from the past, whose parts the "beggar" borrowed eclectically when creating his system.<sup>174</sup> The *Eranistes* greatly displeased Dioscorus, who recognized in it a subtle attack on his Christological tradition. Thus, the *Eranistes* became ample incentive for the persecution of Theodoret.

In early AD 448, inspired by Theodoret's *Eranistes*, Domnus of Antioch dispatched a letter to the emperor Theodosius II in which he explicitly accused Archimandrite Eutyches of Apollinarianism.<sup>175</sup> However, this proved to be a political *faux pas*, for the imperial court was the one place where Eutyches, and through him the Alexandrian party, enjoyed immunity.

The Alexandrian party more than compensated for its inadequacy in reflective theological thinking by the strength of its political connections. Dioscorus exerted influence on the powerful great chamberlain, the eunuch Chrysaphius, a confidant of Emperor Theodosius II. The source of Dioscorus's power in

172 See Theodoret's *Ep.* 110; Karl Günther, *Theodoret von Cyrus und die Kämpfe in der orientalischen Kirche vom Tode Cyrills bis zur Einberufung des sogenannten Räuber-Konzils* (Aschaffenburg: Werburn, 1913). 27–28.; Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 281–82.; Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 275.; Opitz, "Theodoretos von Kyros," col. 1793.

173 The general academic consensus is that the *Eranistes* was composed in the year AD 447: Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*, ed. Gerard H. Ettlinger, *Critical Text and Prolegomena* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). 3., and Theodoret of Cyrus, *Eranistes*, ed. T.P. et al. Halton, trans. G.H. Etlinger, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 106 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003). 2.

174 A. Louth argued that a better translation of the name of this work would be "the collector" (Louth, "John Chrysostom and the Antiochene School to Theodoret of Cyrrhus," 350.). However, given the overall criticism of the theological method and ideas of the antihero, a term with a more pejorative connotation than mere "collector" is in order. Thus "beggar" seems quite suitable translation of the Greek *eranistes* in this case.

175 Martin Jugie, "Eutychès et Eutychianisme," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, ed. Alfred Vacant and Eugène Mangenot (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1924), col. 1534.; Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 278. Stewardson remarks that this letter is not mentioned by E. Schwartz in his *Der Prozess des Eutyches*. He is, however, prepared to accept its authenticity (Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 82 and 159.).

Constantinople was the renowned Archimandrite Eutyches, who happened to be the godfather and spiritual advisor of Chrysaphius.<sup>176</sup> This Alexandrian alliance with the court produced an imperial decree issued on April 18, 448 against the followers of Nestorius. In essence this decree was directed against Theodoret. It implicitly ordered the destruction of his writings against Cyril of Alexandria and the deposition of Irenaeus of Tyre, who had been installed at Theodoret's insistence.<sup>177</sup> The decree ordered Theodoret to return to his diocese in Cyrrhus and prohibited him from leaving again. He was charged of having organized synods in the diocese of Orient, allegedly confusing the "orthodox."<sup>178</sup> The decree effectively impeded Theodoret's theological efforts by placing him under house arrest and by undermining his theological integrity by condemning his works. Implicitly, the decree was a charge of heresy against Theodoret. However, Theodoret's authority precluded his deposition. It would take a council for him to be deposed.

Theodoret immediately embarked upon intense diplomatic activity, appealing to the imperial dignitaries. He publicly challenged the decision by expressing doubts about the authenticity of the order for his house arrest. He vehemently defended his actions, pointing out his evident pastoral dedication to his diocese, which flourished both spiritually and economically under his supervision, and which he left rarely and then only at the invitation of higher ecclesial authorities.<sup>179</sup> He also wrote a conciliatory letter to Dioscorus, urging him not to heed the calumnious charges against him.<sup>180</sup> However, displeased by Theodoret's *Eranistes*, Dioscorus's reply was less than favorable. In a letter of September AD 448, Theodoret wrote: "But the very pious bishop Dioscorus has written us a letter such as never ought to have been written by one who has learned from the God of all not to listen to vain words."<sup>181</sup> The gravity of the situation is well documented in Theodoret's intensive correspondence with imperial dignitaries, which demonstrates that he anticipated an escalation of Dioscorus's animosity. Theodoret was preparing the ground for his defense.<sup>182</sup>

176 J.M. Fuller, "Eutyches," in *A Dictionary of Christian Biography*, ed. William Smith and Henry Wace (London: John Murray, Albermarle Street, 1880), 404.; Venables, "Theodoretus, Bishop of Cyrrhus," 912.

177 Cf. Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*," 79.

178 Theodoret, *Ep.* 80 (Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 1–95. 188–91.)

179 Theodoret, *Epp.* 79 (ibid., 182–89.) and 81 (ibid., 192–99.).

180 Theodoret, *Ep.* 83 in ibid., 204–08.

181 Theodoret, *Ep.* 86 in NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 281–82; Cf. Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*," 81.; Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 1–95. 226–33.; Schwartz, *Der Prozess des Eutyches*. 60.

182 See *Epp.* 92–96, 99–101, 103, 104, 106; Cf. Schwartz, *Der Prozess des Eutyches*. 60.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*," 81.

### 2.9.1 *The Resident Council of Constantinople (AD 448)*

The Christological debate, which Theodoret had renewed the previous year by writing the *Eranistes*, escalated on November 8, 448, at the first session of the Resident Council.<sup>183</sup> Eusebius, bishop of Dorylaeum, unpleasantly surprised the bishops assembled to adjudicate a disagreement between the Metropolitan of Sardis and two of his suffragans by producing a *Libellus* against the renowned Constantinopolitan archimandrite Eutyches in which he accused him of a heresy, namely, of teaching of the one, divine, nature of Christ after the Incarnation, suggesting their commingling (σύγχυσις).<sup>184</sup> The charge was identical to Theodoret's charge in the *Eranistes*. Flavian reportedly tried to avoid prosecuting Eutyches and thus creating a new controversy and conducted his examination of Eutyches's Christology in a half-hearted way. Finally, on November 22, 448 Eutyches was condemned for the heresy of Apollinarius and Valentinus, and he was deposed.<sup>185</sup>

Eutyches immediately appealed to Theodosius II and Pope Leo of Rome. As expected, Dioscorus sided with Eutyches, refusing to accept the verdict.<sup>186</sup> Not surprisingly, a general council was convoked for August 1, 449 in Ephesus.<sup>187</sup> The imperial summons issued on March 30, 449 was directed to Dioscorus. The letter expressly forbade Theodoret from taking part in the impending council.<sup>188</sup> The Emperor confirmed this decision in another letter addressed to Dioscorus, which appointed him chair of the upcoming council, while at the same time condemning Theodoret for his alleged "opposition to Cyril."<sup>189</sup> On this evidence, it is not difficult to agree with P. Goubert that Eutyches's

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183 The Resident Council was an *ad hoc* synod of orthodox bishops who happened to be present in Constantinople. It met irregularly, only when the need arose for adjudication of issues brought before the Archbishop of Constantinople, which exceeded his episcopal authority. Such a synod is an extraordinary occurrence in the canon law of the Eastern Church, peculiar to the archdiocese of Constantinople.

184 ACO II, 1. 1, pp. 100–1.

185 ACO II, 1. 1, p. 140. For further discussion see Schwartz, *Der Prozess des Eutyches*. 65.; Jugie, "Eutychès et Eutychianisme," col. 1585–86.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*," 82 and 85.

186 Schwartz, *Der Prozess des Eutyches*. 85–86.

187 Jugie, "Eutychès et Eutychianisme," col. 1587.; Paul Goubert, "Le rôle de Sainte Pulchérie et de l'eunuque Chrysaphios," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Alois Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1951), 311.

188 Jugie, "Eutychès et Eutychianisme," col. 1587.

189 Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 302–03.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*," 91.

godchild Chrysaphius made all of these arrangements to secure the victory of the Alexandrian party at yet another council of Ephesus.<sup>190</sup>

### 2.9.2 *The Council of Ephesus (AD 449)*

The Council met on August 8, 449. Besides Dioscorus of Alexandria, among those present were Domnus of Antioch, Juvenal of Jerusalem, Thalassius of Caesarea in Cappadocia, three Roman legates, and about 130 other bishops. In a rapid succession of events the council restored Eutyches, exonerating him of suspicion of heresy, and deposed Eusebius of Dorylaeum and Flavian of Constantinople, refusing them the right to respond to the charges brought against them. The latter was apparently so maltreated that he died a couple of days later. Dioscorus even invited soldiers and rebellious monks led by a certain extremist, Abbot Barsumas, who threatened to rend in two those who divide Christ into two natures. In this atmosphere of intimidation, many bishops, including Domnus of Antioch, signed the acts of the council. Yet the same fate also awaited Domnus, who was deposed soon afterwards.<sup>191</sup>

On August 22, 449 the council convened once again. Now that Eutyches had been restored, Dioscorus's party turned to Theodoret, Ibas of Edessa, and Irenaeus of Tyre. Not surprisingly, all of them were expressly condemned, deposed, and exiled *in absentia*.<sup>192</sup> Venables is correct in suspecting that the removal of Theodoret from the theological scene was a major motivation for holding the council.<sup>193</sup> The importance of Theodoret's elimination is well evidenced and documented, not only in the recurring imperial decrees from the same year, but also in the acts of the Council of Ephesus; the emperor's command forbidding Theodoret from taking part in the proceedings was read out loud in the full session.<sup>194</sup> Stewardson rightly believes that the main reason behind this action was to discourage any possible attempts by the participants to request his presence.<sup>195</sup> In this case Theodoret's genius was appropriately

190 Cf. Goubert, "Le rôle de Sainte Pulchérie et de l'eunuque Chrysaphios," 311.

191 Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 287–88.; Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 305.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*," 91–92. See also Honigsmann, "Juvenal of Jerusalem," 231–32.

192 Venables, "Theodoreus, Bishop of Cyrrhus," 913.

193 Ibid.

194 See the summons directed to Dioscorus by Theodosius II. The letter is part of the Acts of Chalcedon, Session 1 (*The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: General Introduction, Documents before the Council, Session 1*, 133.); See also: *ibid.*; *The Second Synod of Ephesus: Together with Certain Extracts Relating to It, from Syriac MSS. Preserved in the British Museum* (Dartford: Orient Press, 1881), 7.

195 Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*," 92–93.

feared: his masterly Christological exposition evident in the *Eranistes* might have swayed votes. It is very likely that had Theodoret been allowed to take part in the proceedings of the Council of Ephesus in AD 449, the history of the Christological controversies would have been different.

Theodoret's deposition resembled a theological lynching rather than an examination of his theological teachings by an ecclesiastical tribunal. Having stripped Theodoret of his right to be present and defend himself, the council received the charges brought against him by a certain Antiochene presbyter, Pelagius.<sup>196</sup> Theodoret was called "an adversary of God," since together with Domnus of Antioch he had allegedly created a new creed without regard to the Council of Ephesus in AD 431.<sup>197</sup> Also, Theodoret's letter to the monks of Euphratesia, Osroene, Syria, Phoenicia, and both Cilicias (*Ep.* 151), against Cyril of Alexandria and the Council of Ephesus, written shortly after the council in AD 431, was read and condemned as blasphemous.<sup>198</sup> Finally, excerpts from Theodoret's *Defense of Diodore and Theodore* and certain passages attributed to Theodoret and quoted by Cyril in his book *Against Theodore*, were read.<sup>199</sup> Dioscorus then proclaimed Theodoret's condemnation: he was to be deposed and excommunicated. With the exception of the Roman legates, whose protestations were ignored, all the other members of the council assented to this condemnation.<sup>200</sup> As a result Theodoret was exiled, and at his request (*Ep.* 119) sent to a monastery about three miles from Apamea in Palestine, where he had been professed.<sup>201</sup>

196 Cf. *The Second Synod of Ephesus: Together with Certain Extracts Relating to It, from Syriac MSS. Preserved in the British Museum*, 211–41.

197 Ibid., 211–12. The acts state that the Council of Ephesus forbade the writing of new creeds and decreed that the "creed of the Holy and Blessed Fathers" alone must be used. Since the Council of Ephesus in AD 431 did not produce its own definition of faith but used the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed it is reasonable to assume that this council is referring to that creed (cf. ACO I. 1. 7. 105; Henricus Denzinger and Adolfus Schönmetzer, eds., *Enchiridion symbolorum: Definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, xxxvi emendata ed. (Barcinone, Friburgi Brisgoviae, Romae: Herder, 1976), 97.265–66.).

198 *The Second Synod of Ephesus: Together with Certain Extracts Relating to It, from Syriac MSS. Preserved in the British Museum*, 218–40.

199 Johannes Flemming, ed. *Akten der ephesinischen Synode vom Jahre 449: Syrisch* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1917), 105–13.; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 26.

200 *The Second Synod of Ephesus: Together with Certain Extracts Relating to It, from Syriac MSS. Preserved in the British Museum*, 241.

201 The conventional scholarship holds that the monastery in question is Nicerte; Quasten, *Patrology: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the*

Theodoret attempted unsuccessfully to obtain a retrial at a tribunal in Rome. In the *Ep.* 119, he requested from the patrician Anatolius to be allowed to move to the West.<sup>202</sup> The request was denied. In another letter, *Ep.* 116, addressed to the Roman presbyter Renatus, he repeated his request to be tried before Leo.<sup>203</sup> However, in the new circumstances, following Dioscorus's triumph in Ephesus, there was very little that the Church of Rome could do. In Theodoret's own words, after the Council of Ephesus in AD 449, he was rejected as "the head and front of the heresy."<sup>204</sup>

### 2.9.3 *The Council of Chalcedon (AD 451)*

A change in the balance of power came rather soon: on July 28, 450, Emperor Theodosius II died after a riding accident. His sister Pulcheria swiftly married Marcian, an elderly general, and assumed power. Chrysaphius, who as a eunuch was precluded from assuming imperial power, was executed for his crimes and his plots against Pulcheria.<sup>205</sup> Having lost its main supporter, the Alexandrian party suddenly became vulnerable to the wrath of Rome for the violence committed at the Council of Ephesus in AD 449.

After news of the proceedings of the council reached Pope Leo I, he initiated a strong campaign against its decisions. The pope advocated convocation of an ecumenical council in Italy as soon as possible, denouncing the Council of Ephesus as a "latrocinium" ("council of robbers").<sup>206</sup> For this he received the support of both Galla Placidia (mother of the emperor of the West, Valentinian III) and Pulcheria. The major obstacle to the realization of this

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*Council of Chalcedon.* 550–51; Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 96–147. 68 and 80–81.; Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461.* 308.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 97.; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451).* 27. This view has been challenged by J.-P. Fourdrin who argues that the monastery of his refuge was not Nicerte, which was located some 70 kilometers north east of Apamea; Fourdrin, "Note sur la localisation de Nikertai," 180–82.

202 Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 96–147. 76–83.

203 Ibid., 68–73.

204 Theodoret, *Ep.* 147

205 See NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 9.

206 Leo the Great, *Ep.* 95: "Sed quam contraria tunc his monitis atque observationibus meis acta sint, multum est explicare; nec opus est epistolari pagina comprehendere quidquid in illo Ephesino non iudicio, sed latrocinio potuit perpetrari." in PL 54. 943B; ET in NPNF<sup>2</sup> 12, 71.



plan was Theodosius II himself, who considered the Christological settlement of the Second Council of Ephesus quite acceptable.<sup>207</sup>

It comes as a little surprise then that Pulcheria and Marcian convoked a general council as early as May 451, less than a year after assuming power.<sup>208</sup> Besides theological reasons and pressure from the West, Pulcheria must also have been eager to do away with the vestiges of Chrysaphius's rule, including his supporters who triumphed at the council of Ephesus (AD 449). The new council was called for September AD 451 in Nicaea, but had to be relocated due to the inadequacy of the facilities in Nicaea and its distance from the capital.<sup>209</sup> Due to the relocation, the opening of the council was delayed until October 8, 451.<sup>210</sup>

At the first session of the council, Dioscorus was ordered by the imperial commissioners to take the stand as a defendant, after Eusebius of Dorylaem accused him of heresy and violence committed at the Council of Ephesus (AD 449).<sup>211</sup> Next, the commissioners ordered that the documents pertaining to the council be read. When the secretary of the sacred consistory read the summons of Theodosius II, which stated that Theodoret of Cyrrhus had been precluded from attending the council, the commissioners ordered: "Let the most devout Theodoret enter and take part in the council, since the most holy archbishop Leo has restored his see to him, and since the most divine and pious emperor has decreed his attendance at the holy council."<sup>212</sup> This order was opposed by the bishops of Egypt, Illyricum, and Palestine, who denounced Theodoret as the "teacher of Nestorius."<sup>213</sup> But the bishops of Orient, Pontus, Asia, and Thrace countered the protestations by accusing

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207 For the text of the correspondence see ACO II. 3. 1. pp. 13–17 and ACO II. 1. 1. pp. 5–8; *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Sessions XI–XVI, Documents after the Council, Appendices, Glossary, Bibliography, Maps, Indices*, 157–92. For analyses of events see: Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey*. 89–94.; Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. 309–10. See also Johannes Haller, *Das Papsttum: Idee und Wirklichkeit*, vol. 1 (München: Rowohlt, 1965). 133–34.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 103–04.; *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: General Introduction, Documents before the Council, Session I*, 37–40.

208 *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: General Introduction, Documents before the Council, Session I*, 39.

209 ACO II. 1. 1. pp. 27–30; *ibid.*, 40.

210 *Ibid.*

211 *Ibid.*, 130–32.

212 Session I, 26 in *ibid.*, 134.

213 Session I, 27 in *ibid.*



Dioscorus's supporters of being "enemies of faith."<sup>214</sup> Several more accusations passed between the two parties of bishops before Theodoret gracefully ended the commotion. He entered the council, stood in the middle and said: "I have delivered a petition to the most divine, pious and Christ-loving masters of the world. I have appealed against the attacks of which I have been the victim, and I demand that they be investigated."<sup>215</sup> The commissioners recognized that Theodoret's presence was a great point of contention, as neither side would yield. The supporters of Dioscorus would not hear of Leo's restoring Theodoret and of the Bishop of Antioch's "oral witness" to Theodoret's orthodoxy.<sup>216</sup> In this situation, the commissioners welcomed Theodoret's demand for a trial, because he now appeared before the council not as a potential member, but as an accuser.<sup>217</sup> As such he had an undeniable right to be heard.

Theodoret was seated in the middle as a plaintiff, without a right to vote. His presence at the council was welcomed by the Orientals, but strongly opposed by the Egyptians.<sup>218</sup> In this role he awaited his turn, which would come rather late, only at the eighth session of the council. Yet his exclusion from the trial of Dioscorus and the latter's subsequent deposition (Session 111) can only contribute to the legitimacy and integrity of the council.<sup>219</sup>

After Session I, there is no specific mention of Theodoret's role at the council. Sessions II, IV, and V, which worked on the Christological definition, do not mention Theodoret.<sup>220</sup> Yet at Session VI, the solemn proclamation of the definition of faith, Theodoret's name is listed among the signatories. The list contains Theodoret's name in 129th place, and the official formula of approval used by all the members of the council was attached to it: "I have defined and signed."<sup>221</sup> This formula suggests that Theodoret was not a mere spectator in the council thus far, but that he took an active role in the proceedings defining the faith. Yet his role was limited, since his name does not appear among

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<sup>214</sup> Session I, 28 in *ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> Session I, 34 *ibid.*, 135.

<sup>216</sup> Session I, 35 in *ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> Session I, 194–196 in *ibid.*, 165.

<sup>218</sup> Session I, 36–43 in *ibid.*, 135–36.

<sup>219</sup> Session 111 was entirely dedicated to Dioscorus's trial. For the proceedings see Price and Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Sessions 11–X, Session on Carosus and Dorotheus, Session on Photius and Eustathius, Session on Domnus*, 38–116.

<sup>220</sup> See *ibid.*, 5–28, 121–63, 94–205.

<sup>221</sup> Session VI, 9 (129) in *ibid.*, 223. Theodoret's name also appears in the early sixth-century list compiled in Latin by Dionysius Exiguus. In this list Theodoret appears in ninety-fourth position, among the bishops of the province of Augustoeuphratesia (Euphratensis). See Session VI, 9D (94) in Price and Gaddis, *ibid.*, 235.

the members of the commission for the definition of faith.<sup>222</sup> Later critics of the council saw a revival of Nestorianism in Theodoret's presence at the proceedings and his approval of the definition of faith, yet apparently Theodoret remained outside of the main events of the council—he took no active role in the condemnation and deposition of Dioscorus and had no direct hand in defining the faith at the council. He merely consented to the proclaimed definition.

The assembled bishops were apparently weary and displeased that they would have to stay for further proceedings at Chalcedon.<sup>223</sup> After Session VI, they asked the emperor to dissolve the council, but he insisted that although they were “exhausted after enduring toil for a fair period of time,” they must remain for a few more days to resolve all the problems which plagued the Church.<sup>224</sup> The emperor was adamant: “None of you is to leave the holy council until definitive decrees have been issued about everything.”<sup>225</sup>

Theodoret's case was finally tried on October 26, 451, in the second session of the day (Session VIII), after the main business of the council was completed. In this atmosphere it is not surprising that the bishops had very little patience for Theodoret's case. The entire session on Theodoret was completed swiftly. As soon as the session was opened, even before the documents introducing the case had been read, the members of the council requested that Theodoret pronounce an anathema on Nestorius.<sup>226</sup> Assuring the council of his orthodoxy, Theodoret requested that the documents be read first, but the bishops refused to hear anything other than the anathema.<sup>227</sup> Theodoret further resisted such a treatment of his case, insisting that he be properly heard, but the bishops threatened him with excommunication if he did not anathematize Nestorius at once.<sup>228</sup> Finally, Theodoret sarcastically assented: “Anathema to Nestorius and to whoever does not say that the holy Virgin Mary is Theotokos, and to

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222 The commission of faith consisted of Anatolius of Constantinople, the Roman legates (Bishops Paschasinus and Lucentius, the presbyter Boniface, and Julian of Cos), and also Maximus of Antioch, Juvenal of Jerusalem, Thalassius of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Eusebius of Ancyra, the bishops Quintillus, Atticus, and Sozon from Illyricum, Diogenes of Cyzicus, Leontius of Magnesia, Florentius of Sardis, Eusebius of Dorylaeum, Theodore of Tarsus, Cyrus of Anazarbus, Constantine of Bostra, Theodore of Claudiopolis in Isauria, and Francion, Sebastian, and Basil from Thrace: see Session V, 29 in *ibid.*, 200.

223 Session VI, 22 in *ibid.*, 243.

224 Session VI, 23 in *ibid.*

225 Session VI, 23 in *ibid.*

226 Session VIII, 4 in *ibid.*, 254.

227 Session VIII, 5–6 in *ibid.*

228 Session VIII, 8–12 in *ibid.*

whoever divides the one only-begotten Son into two Sons. I have signed the definition of faith and the letter of the most sacred Archbishop Leo, and I think accordingly. And after all this may you be preserved.”<sup>229</sup>

The commissioners and members of the council alike, who accepted Theodoret as fully orthodox and restored his see to him, ignored his irony.<sup>230</sup> This last decision was nothing new, but simply a ratification of the decision taken by Pope Leo, who, as the commissioners mentioned at the beginning of Session I, had received Theodoret into communion and had never accepted his deposition at the Council of Ephesus (AD 449).

It is interesting to note that there is no official record regarding Theodoret's activity and life after Chalcedon. Some scholars argue that Chalcedon did not mark an end to Theodoret's Christological activity and that he updated the *Eranistes* in the years that followed.<sup>231</sup> However, as V. Bolotov pointed out, and G. Ettlinger follows suit, the crudely executed revisions of the *Eranistes* must have been carried out by an anonymous copyist.<sup>232</sup>

The year of his death is point of debate among students of his life. Currently, most historians would place it no later than AD 466. Interestingly, there is no record that the aging Theodoret engaged in any polemical activity in the aftermath of Chalcedon. Perhaps, somewhat ironically, the Council of Chalcedon, which sanctioned Antiochene Christology as a universally accepted definition of the faith and thus caused contention between the theologians of the Orient and Egypt that was to last for many centuries, finally brought peace to Theodoret.

229 Session VIII, 13 in *ibid.*, 254–55. Price and Gaddis rightly consider this last sentence an ironic “God bless you!” The same sentiment is preserved in the Russian translation of the acts, where Theodoret's closing words are rendered as: “And after all this he added, “Good health to you!”; see Price and Gaddis, *ibid.*, 255, n. 11.

230 Session VIII, 15–25 in *ibid.*, 255–56.

231 Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*. 230.; Hilarius Emonds, *Zweite Auflage im Altertum. Kulturgeschichtliche Studien zur Überlieferung der antiker Literatur*, Klassisch-philologische Studien 14 (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1941). 378.; cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 29.

232 Болотовъ, *Theodoretiāna: Отзивъ объ удостоенномъ Св. Синодомъ полной преміи митрополита Макарія въ 1892 г. сочиненіи Н. Н. Глубоковскаго:* “Блаженный Ѳеодоритъ, Его жизнь и литературная дѣятельность. 142–7.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 29–30.

## 2.10 Conclusion

The scholarly consensus recognizes two Christological controversies in the fifth-century Christian Church, Nestorian and Miaphysite. In fact, the traditionally sharp distinction between the two controversies is rather misleading, because they just mark two different stages of the same debate. Elucidating the mystery of the union of divine and human natures in Christ was the focal point of both. The controversy lasted for over twenty years, and the two stages of the controversy mark the current theological prevalence of one or other of the involved parties. Equilibrium was established by the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451).

The Christological dispute in the Nestorian controversy never really ceased. The Council of Ephesus (AD 431) did not produce a theological settlement, only a political one. The debates between Cyril's council and the Orientals (who were represented chiefly by Theodoret), not surprisingly continued for a couple of years afterwards. The *Tomos of Reunion* (AD 433), a document drafted by Theodoret of Cyrrhus, which brought *rapprochement* between the two parties, attempted to bridge the theological gap left by the Council of Ephesus (AD 431). There was a brief truce between the Alexandrians and Antiochenes from AD 435 to 438. However Cyril's attack on the orthodoxy of the masters of Antiochene theology, Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, signaled clearly that the debate around the Nestorian controversy had not been fully resolved. Theodoret of Cyrrhus immediately reacted and broke the fragile truce with Cyril and his party, an enmity which continued even after the latter's death.

The Miaphysite controversy was merely a continuation of the battle between two parties. Now the Cyrillian party was led by Dioscorus of Alexandria, while Theodoret of Cyrrhus controlled the Antiochene party. Dioscorus harbored an intense dislike of the *Tomos of Reunion*, the theological settlement signed by Cyril. He believed that in it Cyril made unnecessary theological concessions to the Antiochenes. At the same time Theodoret also believed that the prestige of Antiochene Christology had suffered in the settlement. He saw an opportunity and devised a plan to restore the venerable standing of his theological tradition. This he finally succeeded in effecting at the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451.

The precision of Theodoret's Christological expression was forged in the debates of the fifth century, in both of which he fought on the front lines. His Christological concepts did not change fundamentally. The only detectable change is an improvement in the clarity with which he expressed them. The

following chapters will demonstrate this by analyzing his early Christological thought as evidenced in works predating or early in the controversy and a mature work written late in the Christological debate which was updated after the Council of Chalcedon.

The present study of Theodoret's role in the Christological controversies of the fifth century, informed by the analysis of his Christology in the following chapters, will show that restoration of the good bishop of Cyrrhus to his rightful place in church history, as a major theological mind who largely defined the Christological orthodoxy at Chalcedon and whose contribution to the formulation of Christology was on a par with that of Cyril of Alexandria, is in order and long overdue.

PART 2

*The Early Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus*





## *Expositio rectae fidei*

### 3.1 Authorship

The *Expositio rectae fidei* had been attributed to Justin Martyr from at least the seventh century. Passages from the *Expositio* appear among the florilegia in the collection of patristic quotations compiled by the Dyothelites in response to Monothelite teachings.<sup>1</sup> Given Theodoret's controversial reputation, it is not surprising that the work does not appear under his name. From the seventh century onwards, it is consistently attributed to Justin as his "third book."

Sellers argues that the misattribution was unintentional. The *Expositio* must have come down to the fathers of the seventh century as an anonymous work. The Dyothelites turned to the text itself in order to identify the author. There they discovered Justin.<sup>2</sup> Sellers argues that once the texts received the approbation of antiquity, they quickly found their way into later editions of collections of patristic quotations made by Leontius of Byzantium, *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos* and *Contra Monophysitas*.<sup>3</sup> According to Sellers, it is unlikely that Leontius would make use of a text previously compromised by his archenemy Severus of Antioch.<sup>4</sup>

Sellers's theory regarding how the texts came to be found in the writings of Leontius of Byzantium is convincing. It is highly unlikely that they could have been attributed to Justin Martyr in the century following Theodoret's death, because memory of him was kept very much alive through the Christological

1 The ancient works containing the *Expositio rectae fidei* which cite Justin Martyr as their author are: a florilegium compiled at the fifth session of the Lateran Council of AD 649, *Antiquorum partum doctrina de Verbi incarnatione* (AD 662–79), and *Antirrhetica* of Nicephorus of Constantinople (+ AD 826). For further details see: Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 146–47.; Friedrich Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz und die gleichnamigen Schriftsteller der griechischen Kirche*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur Bd. 3, Hft. 1–2 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1887). 92ff.

2 Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 147.

3 PG 86a, 1267–1396. Sellers argues that the collections assembled by Leontius of Byzantium did not originally include citations from the *Expositio*, because Severus had attacked it viciously a couple of decades earlier. He argues that Dyothelite apologists interpolated the florilegia in the seventh century, adding passages from the *Expositio*, which they thought was written by Justin Martyr. See *ibid.*, 146–47.

4 *Ibid.*, 146, note 4.



debates. And it is indeed possible that they came down to the seventh century as anonymous and were unintentionally misattributed to Justin. However, one must not discount the possibility that the work might have been intentionally attributed to Justin Martyr in order to save it from Emperor Justinian's militias, who were purging monastic libraries of all "heretical writings." The monks, who often did not concur with imperial standards of "orthodoxy" and saw value in certain writings condemned as heretical would sometimes simply change the name of the author when copying a work in order to preserve it. This ploy is especially evident in the texts of the famous monastic collection, the *Philokalia*. For instance, we are indebted to such monastic copyists for the survival of many of the "Origenist" writings of Evagrius Ponticus, which have come down to us under the name of Sinaite fathers. Whatever the motivation, the same technique was likely used for Theodoret's *Expositio rectae fidei*. It is plausible that the attribution of the *Expositio rectae fidei* originated in Antiochene circles of the era following the controversy over the *Three Chapters*. The subsequent condemnation of the writings of Theodoret of Cyrillus against Cyril of Alexandria by the Council of Constantinople (AD 553) cast permanent suspicion on his Christology, and it became necessary to dissociate the *Expositio* from him in order to save it from the pyres of imperial censorship.

The attribution to Justin Martyr went unquestioned until the eighteenth century. Some two hundred years later, the work has been conclusively restored to Theodoret of Cyrillus, whose authorship has remained unchallenged since 1930.

In the sixteenth century Robertus Stephanus included the *Expositio* in his edition of the *Justini Opera* without any remarks regarding its provenance.<sup>5</sup> As Sellers noted, that suggests that the authenticity of Justin's authorship went unchallenged until at least 1551.<sup>6</sup> The first evidence of suspicion is recorded in 1712, when M. Lequien characterized it as the work of a crypto-Nestorian who wrote under the pseudonym of Justin in order to promote Nestorianism.<sup>7</sup> This marks a turning point in the attribution of the *Expositio*. From that point on,

5 More on Robertus Stephanus (French: Robert Estienne) in Phillippe Renouard, *Imprimeurs parisiens, libraires, fondateurs de caractères et correcteurs d'imprimerie: Depuis l'introduction de l'imprimerie à Paris (1470) jusqu'à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Librairie A. Claudin, 1898). 124–25.

6 Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 145.

7 PG 94, 341ff. (reprint of Michel Lequien, *Sancti patris nostri Joannis Damasceni, monachi et presbyteri Hierosolymitani, Opera omnia quae exstant et ejus nomine circumferuntur. Ex variis editionibus et codicibus manu exaratis, Gallicis, Italicis & Anglicis, collecta, recensita, Latine versa, atque annotationibus illustrata, cum praevius dissertationibus, & copiosis indicibus*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gaspar Girardi, 1712). 756ff.); Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 145.

it was numbered among the spurious writings of Justin Martyr, as is evidenced in Prudentius Maranus's comments from 1742.<sup>8</sup> The work was then considered Nestorian for most of the following century.<sup>9</sup>

In 1880 J.K.T. von Otto published his third edition of the works of Justin Martyr.<sup>10</sup> In this critical edition, the *Expositio* was published among the *fragmenta pseudo-ivstini*.<sup>11</sup> In creating the critical text, von Otto used most of the extant manuscripts containing the *Expositio rectae fidei*: *Codex (Regius) Parisinus MCCLXVIII*—codex A; *Codex (Regius) Parisinus CMXXXVIII*—codex A<sup>b</sup>; *Codex (Regius) Parisinus MCCLIX A*—codex B; *Codex (Regius) Parisinus CDL*—codex C; *Codex Coislinianus CXX*—codex D; *Codex Coislinianus CCXXV*—codex D<sup>b</sup>; *Codex Claromontanus LXXXII*—codex E and E<sup>b</sup>; *Codex Argentoratensis grace IX*—codex F; *Codex Gissensis DCLXIX*—codex G; *Codex Monacensis graecus CXXI*—codex M; *Codex Venetus graecus LXXXVI*—codex V. Several codices containing the *Expositio* were not taken into consideration due to their inaccessibility,<sup>12</sup> but the chances that these manuscripts would substantially alter von Otto's critical text are negligible.

Von Otto detected two recensions of the text, a shorter and a longer version.<sup>13</sup> The shorter version is found in the reliable ancient codices D, G, and B, while the other manuscripts of the same family (AA<sup>b</sup>E<sup>b</sup>V) contain the longer text. Von Otto's critical edition relies on this manuscript family. The rest of the manuscripts have the relatively corrupted text of the longer recension.<sup>14</sup>

The two versions of the *Expositio rectae fidei* have existed since at least the tenth century.<sup>15</sup> The longer recension is divided into eighteen chapters. The shorter version excludes chapters 1, 6, and 18, most of chapters 7, 8, and 16, and parts of chapters 5, 9, 10, and 13. As Sellers remarks, the shorter version is about three-fifths the length of the complete version.<sup>16</sup> F.K. von Funk conducted a study of the two recensions and concluded that the shorter version is merely

8 See: PG 6, 1203ff.

9 Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 145.

10 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 2–67.

11 Ibid., vii.

12 Ibid., xix.

13 Ibid., viii.; Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 145.

14 See Sellers, Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 145.

15 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. viii.; Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 145.

16 Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 145.

an abbreviation of the original text, pronouncing the longer version the *textus receptus*.<sup>17</sup> This text was critically analyzed and published by von Otto.

Only after the publication of von Otto's critical edition did the *Expositio* draw scholarly attention. In 1884 J. Dräseke argued that the *Expositio* was of Apollinarian provenance. Dräseke saw Apollinarius's lost work *de Trinitate* in the shorter recension of the text.<sup>18</sup> However, von Funk's proof that the longer recension is the authentic text of the *Expositio* marginalized Dräseke's theory.<sup>19</sup>

The major breakthrough in restoring the authorship of the *Expositio* to Theodoret of Cyrrhus came in 1930. Soon after publishing a critical edition of the *Liber contra impium Grammaticum* of Severus of Antioch,<sup>20</sup> J. Lebon published an article in which he argued for Theodoret's authorship.<sup>21</sup> Lebon's argument was based on the evidence provided by Severus. Writing in the year AD 518, Severus, a former patriarch of Antioch with passionate sympathies for Miaphysite doctrines, quoted passages from the *Expositio*, attributing them expressly to Theodoret of Cyrrhus.<sup>22</sup> The impact of Lebon's argument is evident in an article a few years later, when the great M. Richard advanced an argument about the date of composition of the *Expositio*, taking Theodoret's authorship as a given.<sup>23</sup>

The matter was settled in 1945 when R.V. Sellers, in an independent argument, proved that the *Expositio* was indeed a work of Theodoret of Cyrrhus. He furthered Lebon's original proposition by providing a comparative study of the vocabulary, ideas, and style of the *Expositio* and of Theodoret. Sellers further

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17 Franz Xaver von Funk, "Die pseudojustinische *Expositio rectae fidei*," in *Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen* (Paderborn: Schöningh., 1899), 253–91; See also: Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 145–46.; G. Krüger, "Review of Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen von Prof. F.K. Funk," *The American Journal of Theology* 4, no. 4 (1900): 856.

18 Johannes Dräseke, *Apollinarios von Laodicea. Sein Leben und seine Schriften. Nebst einem Anhang: Apollinarii Laodicensi quae supersunt dogmatica*, vol. 7, Texte und Untersuchungen (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1892). 3–4 and 353–63.; Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 145.

19 See Funk, "Die pseudojustinische *Expositio rectae fidei*," 253–91.

20 Severus of Antioch, *Liber contra impium Grammaticum*, *Orat. tert. pars prior*, trans. Joseph Lebon, *Corpus scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (Paris: E Typographeo Reipublicae, 1929).

21 Lebon, "Restitutions à Théodoret de Cyr," 523–50.

22 Severus of Antioch, *Liber contra impium Grammaticum* 3, 1, 5. p. 65ff.

23 Richard, "L'Activité littéraire de Theodoret avant le concile d'Éphèse," 84–89.

pointed out that there are indications that Theodoret himself recognized the work as his.<sup>24</sup>

In the very next issue of the *Journal of Theological Studies*, F.L. Cross pronounced the verdict that the combination of Lebon's and Sellers's studies "are so compelling that the authorship of the 'opusculum' may now be looked upon as settled."<sup>25</sup> Since then, the attribution of the *Expositio rectae fidei* to Theodoret of Cyrrhus has not been challenged. Current scholarly opinion accepts it unanimously.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.2 Date of Composition

The date of composition of Theodoret's *Expositio rectae fidei* is the subject of debate. Prior to the identification of Theodoret as the author, several general proposals about the date of the work have been put forward. In the eighteenth century, when the first doubts about the authenticity of Justin Martyr's authorship arose, it was proposed that the work's *Sitz im Leben* was a Nestorian milieu during the Christological controversies of the fifth century. In 1712 Lequien argued that the *Expositio* must have been written after the Eutychian controversy. However, thirty years later, Prudentius Maranus proposed Nestorius's arrival in Constantinople as the *terminus ante quem*.<sup>27</sup>

In 1930 J. Lebon restored the *Expositio rectae fidei* to Theodoret. His analysis of the style of the text, coupled with the absence of polemical devices characteristic of the Nestorian controversy and the generally irenic tone led him to set AD 428 (the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy) as the *terminus*

<sup>24</sup> Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus."

<sup>25</sup> Cross, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei,'" 58.

<sup>26</sup> See: Martin F.A. Brok, "The Date of Theodoret's *Expositio Rectae Fidei*," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 2 (1951): 178.; *ibid.*; Quasten, *Patrology: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*. 548.; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 89–103.; Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*. 331–33.

<sup>27</sup> PG 94, 341 (M. Lequien) and PG 6, 1203 (P. Maranus); See also: Lequien, *Sancti patris nostri Joannis Damasceni, monachi et presbyteri Hierosolymitani, Opera omnia quae exstant et ejus nomine circumferuntur. Ex variis editionibus et codicibus manu exaratis, Gallicis, Italicis & Anglicis, collecta, recensita, Latine versa, atque annotationibus illustrata, cum praevis dissertationibus, & copiosis indicibus*. 756ff.; Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 145.

*ante quem*.<sup>28</sup> Lebon admitted that an analysis of the content alone would not have been sufficient for a positive identification of the author, but would place him only generally within the Antiochene milieu. The author could easily have been an Antiochene author from the latter half of the fourth century, e.g., Diodore of Tarsus. A generation before, J. Dräseke had reached the same conclusion, but mistakenly attributed the work to Apollinarius.<sup>29</sup> However, the evidence provided by Severus of Antioch ties Theodoret definitively to the writing of the *Expositio*, thus placing the date of composition in the first half of the fifth century.<sup>30</sup>

M. Richard supplemented Lebon's argument with his analysis of the Christological language and ideas of the *Expositio*. Richard detected certain shifts in the clarity of Theodoret's Christological expressions through time, which he attributed to a process of maturation in his theology brought about by the debates with Cyril of Alexandria and his followers. He points out that Theodoret's early works freely use expressions such as "the perfect man" (ὁ τέλειος ἄνθρωπος) to indicate Christ's humanity. In later works Theodoret came to prefer less controversial expressions such as "human nature" (ἡ ἀνθρωπινὴ φύσις), "the assumed" (τὸ ἀναληφθέν), and "humanity" (ἡ ἀνθρωπότης). He reached the conclusion that the rudimentary terminology used in the *Expositio* would preclude the possibility of its composition before the debate with Cyril.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, Richard moved the date *ante quem* forward by about two years, to the winter of AD 430.

However, Sellers moved the argument closer to Lequien's position, proposing AD 447 as the date of composition. Sellers argued that in a letter to Timothy of Doliche Theodoret refers to the *Expositio* explicitly as a work written shortly before the writing of the letter.<sup>32</sup> At the end of his letter to Timothy, Theodoret wrote: "I am also sending what I have recently (πρῶην) written, having been urged so to do by the most religious and holy man of God, the lord \_\_\_\_ [name

28 Lebon, "Restitutions à Théodoret de Cyr," 541–42.

29 Dräseke, *Apollinarios von Laodicea. Sein Leben und seine Schriften. Nebst einem Anhang: Apollinariū Laodicensi quae supersunt dogmatica*. 3–4 and 353–63.

30 Lebon, "Restitutions à Théodoret de Cyr," 541–42.

31 Richard, "L'Activité littéraire de Theodoret avant le concile d'Éphèse," 459–81. See also a brief but informative discussion in Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*. 329–30.

32 Sellers, "Pseudo-Justin's 'Expositio Rectae Fidei': A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus," 158. Cf. Brok, "The Date of Theodoret's *Expositio Rectae Fidei*," 180.

is missing] namely, a brief instruction, of itself sufficient for the teaching of the truth of the apostolic doctrines.”<sup>33</sup>

Theodoret’s letter says that it is written as a response to a “storm” that is troubling the piety of the Church. Sellers argued that the letter must have been written before February 448, since it does not contain any reference to Theodoret’s confinement, which is invariably present in his writings of the period. By inference, he concluded that the *Expositio rectae fidei* was written in AD 447.<sup>34</sup> Sellers remained alone in this view.

Some six years later, M. Brok challenged Sellers’s argument, pointing out that the manner of expression in the *Expositio* and the absence of any reference to Eutycheanism was uncharacteristic of Theodoret’s writings of the post-Ephesine period. Brok further noted that the exactness of Theodoret’s Christological expression had kept improving after he entered into the controversy with Cyril of Alexandria.<sup>35</sup> Thus, following Richard’s argument, he asserted that the “brief instruction” mentioned in the letter to Timothy of Doliche corresponded to the *Demonstrationes per syllogismos* rather than the *Expositio*, which, due to its rudimentary terminology, style of argumentation, and absence of references to Christological controversies, must have been written before the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy.<sup>36</sup>

Recently, J.-N. Guinot challenged both Sellers’s arguments for a later dating as “very fragile and untenable.” Guinot further finds the arguments advanced by Richard or Brok for an early dating equally unconvincing.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, Guinot reluctantly concludes that the *Expositio* is a “work of Theodoret’s youth,” which would help explain its singular character vis-à-vis other doctrinal

33 Theodoret, *Ep.* 130 (PG 83, 1348C: “ταῦτα ἐν κεφαλαίῳ νῦν ὑπηγόρευσα καὶ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς ὑπερέβην τὸ μέτρον. ἀπέστειλα δὲ καὶ ἥν πρῶην ἔγραψα, προτραπείς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοφιλεστάτου καὶ ἀγιωτάτου ἀνθρώπου τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ κυρίου \_\_\_\_\_, σύντομον διδασκαλίαν, ἱκανὴν οὖσαν καὶ αὐτὴν διδάξαι τὴν τῶν ἀποστολικῶν δογμάτων ἀλήθειαν.”)

34 Sellers, “Pseudo-Justin’s ‘Expositio Rectae Fidei’: A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus,” 158–59.

35 Brok, “The Date of Theodoret’s *Expositio Rectae Fidei*,” 178–79.

36 PG 83, 327ff.; *ibid.*, 181.

37 Guinot is reluctant to accept Richard’s argument for an early dating of the *Expositio* based on Christological language and ideas used by Theodoret (Guinot, “L’Expositio rectae fidei et le traité sur la Trinité et l’Incarnation de Théodoret de Cyr: deux types d’argumentation pour un même propos?,” 185–86.). It must be noted, however, that in the dating of Theodoret’s *Commentary of the Song of Songs*, Guinot seems to give credence to Richard’s proposal that the changes of Theodoret’s terminology help in determining the date of composition of his works in relation to the Council of Ephesus of AD 431 (Guinot, “La Christologie de Théodoret de Cyr dans son *Commentaire sur le Cantique*,” 208.).

works of Theodoret.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, the current consensus seems to accept the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy as the *terminus ante quem*.<sup>39</sup>

The arguments advanced by Brok are indeed an improvement on Sellers's theory. A more cautious approach to the dating of the *Expositio* is in order. The rudimentary terminology of Theodoret does not necessarily imply an early date of composition. Theodoret's Christological language does undergo a certain terminological shift in terms of precision of his expression, but the ideas and language exhibited in the *Expositio* do not preclude a date of composition following the Council of Ephesus. The embattled bishop of Cyrrhus did not demonstrate much theological leniency and compromise until after AD 433 at the earliest. The simple terminology and arguments of the *Expositio* could be directed against the Alexandrian party, just as well as against the Eunomians and Apollinarians a decade before the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy. Indeed, if the text had been associated with the attacks on Cyril of Alexandria, that would help explain why Severus of Antioch used it as a negative reference.

The absence of polemical rhetoric in the *Expositio* can also be explained by Theodoret's characteristic avoidance of controversial sources and topics in his writings. One need only think of his *Ecclesiastical History*: although written almost two decades after the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy, it ends with the death of Theodore of Mopsuestia which predated the controversy by a mere year. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the patristic florilegia of the *Erastest*, finalized after the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), also avoid references to the controversial fathers: there are no references to either Diodore of Tarsus or Theodore of Mopsuestia, even though Theodoret held them in high esteem. Thus, the absence of polemical language and rhetorical devices *per se* does not necessarily prove the early authorship of the *Expositio rectae fidei*.

However, the emphasis of Theodoret's argumentation does indeed point to a period predating the Nestorian controversy. During the controversy, debates preoccupied his theological opus and were invariably referenced in his doctrinal writings, but in the *Expositio* Theodoret passes over Scriptural

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38 Guinot, "L'Expositio rectae fidei et le traité sur la Trinité et l'Incarnation de Théodoret de Cyr: deux types d'argumentation pour un même propos?," 187. In his final word on Theodoret's Christology, Guinot included the *Expositio* together with the *Cure for Pagan Maladies* among the works predating the Nestorian controversy; Guinot, "La christologie de Théodoret de Cyr: Essai de bilan illustré par un florilège de textes," 472–74.

39 Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 91.; Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*. 332.; Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 6.



references and arguments which would be remarkably fitting for his Christological debates, and uses them instead to argue Trinitarian points. For instance, in chapter 5 of the *Expositio* Theodoret argues for the divinity of the second and third persons of the Holy Trinity using the Pauline passages Eph 2:20–22 and 3:14–17, arguing that they bear witness to the full divinity of the Trinity. Curiously, the same references are absent from the Christological portion.<sup>40</sup> Such an absence points to an unmistakable Trinitarian emphasis, which was unnecessary and largely missing from doctrinal discourse in the post-Ephesine years.

Moreover, the layout of the material of the *Expositio* points to a clear Trinitarian emphasis. Out of eighteen chapters, the first ten are dedicated to a clear and concise discussion of Trinitarian material. Theodoret was concerned with explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, arguing for the full divinity of the Logos and the Holy Spirit.

Here the difference between terms οὐσία, ὑπόστασις, and τρόπος ὑπάρξεως is clearly laid out in the tradition of the Cappadocian fathers, most notably that of Gregory of Nyssa, as I shall argue later.<sup>41</sup> Though it follows the

40 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei*, 5: “And again to the Ephesians he says thus: “Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you are built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” . . . He taught us in such a lesson about Christ and God and Spirit, the one divinity, who actively dwells in us who are deemed worthy of grace. And he is even more clear in another [place, where] he says: “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may give power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves, and that Christ will indwell in your hearts.” Behold, while remembering the divine indwelling, he has in mind the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And in all the teaching he constructs, the three persons are revealed.” (Otto 3, 16–18; PG 6, 1216: “Καὶ πάλιν πρὸς Ἐφεσίους οὕτως φησὶν· “Ὁντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐν ᾧ πάσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη αὖξαι εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι. . . . Χριστὸν γὰρ καὶ θεὸν καὶ πνεῦμα, τὴν μίαν θεότητα, κατοικεῖν ἐν ἡμῖν κατ’ ἐνέργειαν, τοῖς τῆς χάριτος ἀξιουμένοις, διὰ τῆς τοιαύτης διδασκαλίας ἐπαίδευσεν. Καὶ τοῦτο δῆλον ἅψ’ ὧν καὶ ἐν ἐτέρῳ φησὶν· “Τούτου χάριν κάμπτω τὰ γόνατά μου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐξ οὗ πάντα πατριὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομάζονται, ἵνα δώῃ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστόν. Ἰδοὺ γὰρ πάλιν ἐνοικήσεως θείας μνημονεύων πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα συμπεριλαμβάνων δείκνυται. Καὶ πανταχοῦ δὲ τῆς διδασκαλίας συντάττων τὰ τρία φαίνεται πρόσωπα.”)

41 Theodoret’s use of the Cappadocian Trinitarian lexicon points to a clear indebtedness to their theological genius. However, while Theodoret knew of Basil’s work, his use of certain



theological arguments and lexicon of the Cappadocian corpus against Eunomius, and especially of Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium*, the *Expositio* is free from the unnecessary rhetorical flourish and redundancies of the former. As F. Young has observed, "this is one of the briefest and most lucid statements of Trinitarian orthodoxy to be found in patristic literature."<sup>42</sup> The conclusion to be drawn is that the Trinitarian portion is directed against Eunomian theology.

The remaining eight chapters of the *Expositio* (chapters 11–18) discuss Christology from a soteriological point of view. Theodoret expounds on Christological points from the perspective of the economy of salvation. The theological issues raised in the discussion do indeed touch upon points common to the Apollinarian and Nestorian controversies (e.g., the problem of attributing properties of human nature to Christ is discussed in chapters 10 and 11). It seems that P. Clayton was correct in his assessment of Theodoret's Christological work, pronouncing the opponents in the *Expositio* to be "some kind of Apollinarians."<sup>43</sup> The nature of the argument and rudimentary nature of the Christological discourse in the *Expositio* reflect earlier debates with the Eunomian and Apollinarian milieu.

In conclusion, as I shall argue below, Theodoret's *Expositio rectae fidei* faithfully reflects the theological content and terminology of the Cappadocians (most notably Gregory of Nyssa) in response to the Eunomians and Apollinarians. The *Sitz im Leben* of the *Expositio* is to be sought in the occasions when Theodoret was obliged to respond to these positions. Such responses are recounted *post-factum* in Ep. 81,<sup>44</sup> where he says that he managed to bring an entire village of Eunomians back to the orthodox faith, while in Ep. 113 he says that he "freed many souls from the illness" of Eunomius.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the composition of the *Expositio rectae fidei* is best dated to the period between

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expressions characteristic of Gregory of Nyssa (such as *διάπλασις* in relation to the analogy of Adam and his progeny) points to a closer link with him. A more detailed discussion follows in the section on Theodoret's debt to the Cappadocian Trinitarian lexicon.

42 Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*. 331.

43 Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 98.

44 Ep. 81 (Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 1–95. 182.): "κώμας ὁκτῶ τῆς Μαρκίωνος καὶ τὰς πέριξ κειμένας ἀσμένως πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐποδήγησα ἄλλην κώμην Ἐυνομιανῶν πεπληρωμένην, καὶ ἄλλην Ἀρειανῶν, τῷ φωτὶ τῆς θεογωνίας προσήγαγον, καὶ διὰ τὴν θεῖαν χάριν οὐδὲ ἐν παρ' ἡμῖν αἰρετικῶν ὑπελείφθη ζιζάνιον.

45 Ep. 113 (ibid., 56.): "πλείους μὲν ἢ χιλιάς ψυχὰς ἡλευθέρωσα τῆς Μαρκίωνος νόσου, πολλοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἐκ τῆς Ἀρείου καὶ Εὐνομίου συμμορίας προσήγαγον τῷ Δεσπότη Χριστῷ".

Theodoret's ascent to the bishopric of Cyrrhus in AD 423 and the Nestorian schism at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431.

### 3.3 Outline of the Content

The received text of Theodoret's *Expositio rectae fidei* is divided into two main parts—Trinitarian theology and Christology.<sup>46</sup> It is further subdivided into eighteen chapters, of which the first ten contain discussions about God as the Trinity, while the last eight chapters are reserved for a concise exposition of fundamental tenets of Christology.

#### 3.3.1 *The Trinitarian Discussion—Chapters 1–9*

In chapter 1 Theodoret explains that the *Expositio* is part of his wider apologetical project. Having completed his *ad extra* works “against Jews and Greeks,”<sup>47</sup> he turns his efforts *ad intra*, against “the unlike-minded who hymn the Father and the Son but are not offering worship in the true sense.”<sup>48</sup>

The second chapter sets the parameters of the philosophical framework. Asserting the harmony of the Christian Scriptures and philosophy, Theodoret begins by affirming the existence of only One Cause, which is identified as the one God perceived as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinity is united by substance (οὐσία), since the Father begot the Son and brought forth the Spirit.

46 Summaries of the *Expositio rectae fidei* can be found in Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*, 89–103. and Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*, 331–33.

47 Identification of the work referred to by Theodoret has been a matter of scholarly debate. M. Richard argued that Theodoret was referring here to a now lost work against the Jews and his *Curatio graecarum affectionum* (Richard, “L’Activité littéraire de Theodoret avant le concile d’Éphèse,” 89–106.). Sellers, who places the date of composition after the outbreak of the Eutychian controversy, argued that Theodoret was referring here to his *Eranistes* (Sellers, “Pseudo-Justin’s ‘Expositio Rectae Fidei’: A Work of Theodoret of Cyrus,” 159.). However, M. Brok has convincingly refuted Sellers’s dating of the *Expositio*, though without offering an alternative (Brok, “The Date of Theodoret’s *Expositio Rectae Fidei*,” 179.). The most recent treatment of the problem was by P. Clayton, who offers a brief summary of the debate, again without a proposal (Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*, 89–90.). Thus, Richard’s attempt remains the current identification.

48 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 1 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 2.): “τῶν ἑτεροφρόνων ἀκούσεται τις τὸν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν ἀνυμνοῦντων, ἀλλ’ οὐ κατ’ ὀρθὴν ἔννοιαν τὸ σέβας προσαγόντων.”

The third chapter expounds on the doctrine of the Trinity, defending the oneness of God. Theodoret points out that the three persons of the Trinity share an underlying substance (οὐσία), while the distinctions among them are the modes of existence (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως). Unbegottenness, begottenness, and procession are modes of existence indicating the subsistences (ὑποστάσεις) of the Father, Son (Logos), and Holy Spirit, who share the common substance Godhead. Theodoret supports the distinction with the analogy of Adam and his descendants. Being created by God, Adam was not born and thus had a different mode of existence from his descendants who were born. However, both Adam and his children shared the common substance of humanity.

In the fourth chapter, Theodoret affirms the fundamental importance of the ontological divide between the two orders of existence, uncreated and created. He uses this axiom as a platform from which he defends the divinity of the Logos and the Holy Spirit. Arguing from the Christian perspective which presupposes that the addressees of the *Expositio* were Christian, Theodoret uses Psalm 148 to point out that the Logos and the Spirit do not belong to the created order, since they are not mentioned in the lists of the creatures who glorify God. The implication is that they must belong to the uncreated order, that of the Godhead.

In the fifth chapter, Theodoret develops his discussion in the previous chapter by arguing that the Son (Logos) and the Spirit are united in the same divine nature.<sup>49</sup> This he supports by Scriptural references that speak of the Logos and the Holy Spirit as sharing the same divine dignity with the Father, such as Matthew 28:19; 1 Cor 2:12; 2 Cor 1: 21–22, 13:14; Eph 2:20–22, 3:14–17.

In this chapter Theodoret moves beyond establishing the fundamentals of the distinctions in the Trinity. Having demonstrated that in the Trinity there are three subsistent entities who differ in their modes of existence, here he prefers the term “person” (πρόσωπον) when speaking about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He argues that they all share the same Godhead (θεότης), which designates the common (divine) substance underlying the three persons.

P. Clayton argued that the fact that Theodoret used the term πρόσωπον to indicate distinction in the Holy Trinity does not necessarily mean that he used it as a synonym for ὑπόστασις, but that the Antiochene tradition preferred this term “insofar as it indicates the outward perceptibility of the concrete reality being referred to. In the case of the Trinity’s distinctions, this is pointed to in the earlier use of God as ‘known’ in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” Clayton concludes that “the probable metaphysical assumption” underlying

49 In this chapter *nature* is synonymous with *substance*: (ibid., 16.) “... τῇ θεῇ φύσει ὁ υἱὸς συντέτακται καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα...”

Theodoret's Trinitarian theology is the Stoic doctrine of being. "Inasmuch as the prosopon is the outward countenance of a hypostasis, and is thus that by which human sensibility experiences the hypostasis, it would have been easy for this Antiochene to use the former as a term of preference for indicating the distinctions within the Godhead."<sup>50</sup>

Clayton is right to suggest that it would be an error to equate Theodoret's understanding of the term ὑπόστασις with his understanding of the term πρόσωπον. The two are not interchangeable, since, like the Cappadocians before him, Theodoret understood ὑπόστασις to be a set of individuating characteristics belonging to a πρόσωπον.<sup>51</sup> However, Clayton's understanding of Theodoret's use of πρόσωπον to mean an "outward countenance of hypostasis" reduces it to a mere mask, which sits very uneasily with how it is used at the end of chapter 3. There the term ὑπόστασις designates only a part—the personal characteristics—of a πρόσωπον. Thus, ὑπόστασις functions as a *pars pro toto* for a πρόσωπον.<sup>52</sup> At the end of chapter 3, Theodoret says that the terms "unbegottenness," "begottenness," and "procession" define the ὑπόστασις of each of the persons of the Trinity. Theodoret affirms that each term designates only the property (τὸ ἰδικόν) of the person (πρόσωπον).<sup>53</sup> Had Theodoret, in his Trinitarian theology, used the term πρόσωπον for merely the outward expression of a ὑπόστασις, as Clayton argued, it would be hard to see how he could escape a charge of Modalism, i.e., of teaching that the three πρόσωπα in the Godhead are actually not three distinct personal entities but a single divine πρόσωπον, while the differentiation among the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit is a mere outward countenance, a mask. Such a blunder surely would not have escaped the attention of an astute theologian such as Cyril of Alexandria.

In the sixth chapter, Theodoret finds support for the divinity of the Logos and the Spirit in the inseparable operations of the Trinity, and especially in the authority to create. He uses the classical argument that the authority to create indicates divine status. Citing Psalms 32:6, 101:25, 115:3, he affirms that all three

50 Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 92–93.

51 See further discussion of Theodoret's theological semantic taxonomy in the section below on Cappadocian terminology.

52 For an analogous understanding of the terms in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa, see the discussion in Lucian Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). 103–06.

53 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 3 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 10.): "Καθάπερ γὰρ σφραγίς ἡμῖν τις λεχθὲν τὸ ἀγέννητον εὐθὺς τὴν πατρὸς ἀφορίζει ὑπόστασιν, καὶ πάλιν ὥς τι σημεῖον τὴν τοῦ γεννητοῦ προσηγορίαν ἀκούοντες τὴν υἱοῦ λαμβάνομεν ἔννοιαν, καὶ αὐθις διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἐκπορευτοῦ σημασίας τὸ ἰδικόν τοῦ πνεύματος πρόσωπον παιδεύομεθα."

persons of the Trinity accomplish the work of creation equally. There is no subordination among persons who act in harmony.

In the seventh chapter, Theodoret reiterates his position that there can be nothing between the two orders of existence, uncreated and created order. Only God could properly be said to belong to the uncreated category, while everything else must be situated in the created order. Since the Logos, being God, properly belongs to the uncreated order, and human nature belongs to the created order, the union of the Logos and humanity in Christ must be described as an unmixed union (συνάφεια). Theodoret uses the term συνάφεια to point out that Christ was both fully divine and human, despite the ontological chasm dividing the two orders of existence that separated the two united natures. Moreover, Scriptural evidence, which ascribes to Jesus properties of both natures, necessitates such a description. The Logos is God and cannot undergo any change, neither by addition nor by subtraction, since such alteration would imply imperfection. Conversely, human nature is both created and changeable, and yet in the union with the Logos it retained its properties. The Scriptural evidence testifies that Christ, during his ministry on Earth, exhibited passions of human nature (growth, hunger, thirst, etc.). These are irreconcilable with divinity. Therefore, the Scriptural evidence points to a union of divinity and humanity in Christ in which each nature retained its full properties.

In the eighth chapter, Theodoret reaffirms that the divine substance is utterly transcendent and remains beyond the comprehension of the human intellect. One ought not expect to be able fully to understand or describe the mystery of divine substance.

Yet we may nonetheless learn about God insofar as our ability to comprehend allows, the argument goes in the ninth chapter. Knowledge of things divine is not the result of intellectual efforts, but a gift which stands in direct proportion to one's abilities to receive the mystery and one's perseverance in the quest for God. It is by faith that one can truly contemplate God. For Theodoret, reason comes second to faith, since God is incomprehensible and the rational faculties are ineffective in the search for Him. Through rational investigation of "divine things" (τὰ θεία) one comes only to the realization that reason confirms "pious faith" (εὐσεβῆς θρησκεία). Thus, however feeble rational investigation may be, it still recognizes that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share the same substance (οὐσία), while their differences consist in their modes of existence (ὁ τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως). Difference in the mode of existence by no means necessitates difference in substance. In order to illustrate that the generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit in no way jeopardize their divine status and do not necessitate a change in substance,

Theodoret uses the classical analogy of “light shining forth from light.”<sup>54</sup> Just as light shines impassibly without cutting or separation, so the Son’s generation ought to be understood. He claims: “having gathered knowledge about the one Godhead in three perfect hypostases, we set it forth.”<sup>55</sup>

The chapter ends by introducing Christology as the next subject of investigation. While the Logos is “ineffable,” he can still be investigated due to the economy of salvation, i.e., the Incarnation. Theodoret’s explanation that the Logos was made known through the Incarnation implies that he was indeed its personal subject.

### 3.3.2 *The Christological Discussion—Chapters 10–18*

The tenth chapter opens the Christological portion of the *Expositio rectae fidei* by identifying the economy of salvation as the link between God and creation. In Theodoret’s theology, Incarnation is the link between the Trinitarian and Christological discourse and is the focal point of Christology. It is thanks to the Incarnation of the Logos that one can properly speak about God. Its sole purpose was the restoration of humanity through the expiation of the Protoplast’s transgression. The Incarnation does not involve change in the Logos, who created the human element as a dwelling place. Theodoret describes the union of the Logos and humanity as “utter union” (ἄκρα ἐνωσις). The result of the union

54 Clayton argued that Theodoret relied here on the Nicene Creed, which used the same formula for the generation of the Son (Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 93.). While this connection seems likely, there is no need to discount the possibility that Theodoret was aware of the previous uses of the analogy. The same analogy is found in Origen.

See Origen’s exegesis of Wisdom 7:26 in *ComJn* XIII, 25 in GCS Origenes IV, 249; *Parch* 1, 2, 4 in SC 252, 118, 122: “sicut splendor generatur ex luce;” *Parch* 1, 2, 11 (the Son is the ἀπαύγασμα = brightness of the eternal light which implies eternal generation) and 1, 1, 6; *Homily IX on Jeremiah: HomJr* IX, 4 (Jr 11, 1–10) in GCS Origenes III, 70.17–21, where the Logos is the ἀπαύγασμα of the Father’s eternal light/glory. Wisdom 7:26 had been associated with the Logos as early as the late second or very early third century, as attested by Codex VII of *The Teaching of Silvanus* (see *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, trans. James M. Robinson (Leiden: Brill, 1977). 347.). For further discussion see: Alastair H.B. Logan, “Origen and Alexandrian Wisdom Christology,” in *Origeniana Tertia: The Third International Colloquium for Origen Studies*, ed. Richard Hanson and Henri Crouzel (Roma: Edizioni Dell’Ateneo, 1985), 126–29.

55 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 9 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 33–34.): “κατὰ δύναμιν συλλέξαντες τῆς μίας θεότητος τὴν ἐν τελείαις τρισὶν ὑποστάσεσιν γινώσιν ἐξεθέμεθα.”

is “one Son.” However, each nature retains its characteristics in the union and accordingly the attributes of each nature ought to be assigned to the nature to which they properly belong.

It is interesting to note that the discussion in this chapter reflects some of the concerns of the Arian debates and also coincides with the early Nestorian debate. While emphasizing the personal unity in Christ, Theodore still ascribes attributes to each nature respectively:

The Son is one, He who is set free and He who raised that which was set free. As a man he was set free, and as God he resurrected. When you hear opposing opinions about the one Son, distribute what is said to each nature its own respectively; if there is something great and divine assigning it to the divine nature, and if [there is] something small and human allocating it to the human nature. Thus everyone who ascribes that which belongs to each nature escapes the discord of the opinions, and confesses the one Son who is both before the ages and recent in accordance with the Divine Scriptures.<sup>56</sup>

The same thought is expounded upon in the following chapter, where Theodore affirms that “the Son, being one and two natures, with the one [nature] he performs divine things, and with the other [nature] he accepts them with meekness. As [the one who is] from the Father and God he performs miracles, but as [the one who is] from the Virgin and human, he voluntarily physically endured the cross, the passion, and the rest.”<sup>57</sup>

Theodore’s purpose is to affirm the unity of the person of Christ while safeguarding the totality of both the divine and human natures. His concern is mainly exegetical; the Scriptural testimonies about Christ ascribe to him at the same time both the attributes of divine nature (e.g., miraculous deeds) and attributes of human nature (e.g., fatigue, hunger, sleep). The same

56 Theodore, *Expositio rectae fidei* 10 (Otto 3, 36; PG 6, 1225): “Εἷς οὖν ἐστὶν ὁ υἱός, ὃ τε λυθείς ὃ τε τὸ λυθὲν ἀναστήσας· ἡ γὰρ ἀνθρώπος, ἐλύθη, ἡ δὲ θεός, ἀνέστησεν. Ὅταν οὖν ἀκούσης περὶ τοῦ ἐνός υἱοῦ τὰς ἐναντίας φωνάς, καταλλήλως μέριζε ταῖς φύσεσιν τὰ λεγόμενα, ἂν μὲν τι μέγα καὶ θεῖον, τῇ θεῖᾳ φύσει προσνέμων, ἂν δὲ τι μικρόν καὶ ἀνθρώπινον, τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ λογιζόμενος φύσει. Οὕτω γὰρ καὶ τὸ τῶν φωνῶν ἀσύμφωνον διαφεύξῃ, ἐκάστης ἃ πέφυκεν δεχομένης φύσεως, καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τὸν ἕνα καὶ πρὸ πάντων αἰώνων καὶ πρόσφατον κατὰ τὰς θείας γραφὰς ὁμολογήσεις.”

57 Theodore, *Expositio rectae fidei* 11 (Otto 3, 38–40; PG 6, 1225): “. . . οὕτως ὁ υἱός, εἷς ὢν καὶ δύο φύσεις, κατ’ ἄλλην μὲν τὰς θεοσημείας εἰργάζετο, κατ’ ἄλλην δὲ τὰ ταπεινὰ παρεδέχετο. Ἦι μὲν γὰρ ἐκ πατρὸς καὶ θεός, ἐνεργεῖ τὰ θαύματα, ἡ δὲ ἐκ παρθένου καὶ ἀνθρώπος, τὸν σταυρὸν καὶ τὸ πάθος καὶ τὰ παραπλήσια φυσικῶς ἐθέλων ὑπέμενεν.”



discussion continues in the Nestorian controversy (cf. *Refutation of Cyril's Twelve Anathemas* 4).<sup>58</sup>

In the eleventh chapter Theodoret develops his understanding of the union of Logos and humanity. Bearing in mind the unbridgeable gap between the created and uncreated orders that he maintained, one can see why the explanation of the union of God and humanity was given special attention. Theodoret admits that the true nature of the union is beyond the grasp of human intellect. However, certain features of the union can still be perceived. He admits that no analogy can fully illustrate the union, but there are certain examples that can shed some light on it. Two analogies are used as illustrations in this chapter: the union of body and soul (main analogy), and the coming together of building materials to create a house (supporting analogy).

In the first analogy, Theodoret says that just as a human being is composed of two separate natures, body and soul, there is still one human being. In the case of humans, each nature has its own properties and functions: the intellectual soul designs a ship, but the hands execute the plan. The same can be said of Christ: there are two natures in Christ, divine and human, and each carries out activities proper to it: the divine nature performs miracles, while the human nature accepts them [miracles] in meekness.

The second analogy serves to clarify the body-soul analogy: a house is built from different materials, e.g., stone, wood, etc. However, a house is not the stone or the wood, for if that were the case then the stone or the wood could be called a house even before a house was built. However, the union of these materials in a house is so close that even after a house is demolished the remaining ruins, although a pile of stone and wood, are still referred to as a house.

Theodoret says that the shortcoming of these analogies lies in the fact that the result of the union is a new, single nature, i.e., although man is from two natures, he is not in two natures. In other words, while man consists of soul and body, which have different natures, after their union he does not remain soul and body, but a new composite (human) nature is created. For Theodoret, man is a composite being whose constituent parts are comingled to create a *tertium quid*:

Just as the body is composed of fire and air, water and earth, you would not say that the body is fire, or air or something else, neither is it that very thing of which it is made, because the rationale of that which is composed is different from the rationale of the constituents. So is the

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58 Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 177–79.



man, although he is from soul and body, he is different from both of them.<sup>59</sup>

This was not the case with Christ. In the union of divinity and humanity of Christ, the properties of each nature are not commingled in order to create a new nature. Moreover, the properties of each nature are distinguishable in Christ's activities. Thus, Theodoret says, Christ could perform miracles as God and suffer as man.

P. Clayton argued that this analogy of body and soul ought to be understood in relation to the Arian syllogism and Theodoret's concern to preserve the divinity of the Logos by arguing for his impassibility. According to Clayton, there is no evidence in this text that the Logos could "suffer in himself, in his hypostasis, through his human physis and not in his divine physis," which ultimately makes Theodoret's Christology inadequate.<sup>60</sup> Clayton then goes on to point out that this brief statement on the impassibility of the Logos and Dialogue III of Theodoret's *Eranistes*, written at the outbreak of the Eutychian controversy and implicitly attested by Chalcedon, exhibit identical theological reasoning and reach the same conclusion.

However, I think that the impassibility of the Logos in this case is not the main point, but a rhetorical device leading the argument to the main point: namely, the immutability of the Logos as God. Theodoret argues:

And the soul suffers many more passions than the body, while it feels the sufferings always [together with the body], it largely appears struggling in the cutting off from the body and [to be] undergoing change [even] before the suffering of the body, and [to be] enduring no less pain after the cutting off [from the body]. Also, no religious [person] should dare to say or to allow this about the divinity of Christ. Thus, in the example of man, certain [things] are acceptable, while the rest must be avoided.<sup>61</sup>

59 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 11 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 14.): "...ὥς γὰρ τὸ σῶμα σύγκειται μὲν ἐκ πυρὸς καὶ ἀέρος, ὕδατος τε καὶ γῆς, οὐκ ἐτι δὲ τὸ σῶμα πῦρ εἰποις εἶναι οὐδὲ ἀέρα ἢ τι τῶν ἄλλων (οὐδὲ γὰρ ταῦτ' ὅν τοις ἐξ ὧν ἐστίν, ἐπεὶ καὶ διάφορος ὁ λόγος τοῦ τε συγκειμένου τῶν τε συντεθέντων), οὕτως ὁ ἄνθρωπος, εἰ καὶ ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ἐστίν, ἕτερος παρὰ τὰ ἐξ ὧν ἐστίν."

60 Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 96.

61 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 11 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 14.): "καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πολλοῖς τῶν τοῦ σώματος προκατεχομένη παθῶν καὶ προπάσχει πολλάκις τοῦ σώματος, καὶ συμπάσχει διηνεκῶς, φαινομένη πολλάκις τὴν τομὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀγωνιώσα καὶ πρὸ τοῦ πάθους τοῦ σώματος ἀλλοιούμενη καὶ μετὰ τὴν τομὴν οὐδὲν ἥττον τὰ τῆς ὁδύνης ἐμπαθῶς δεχομένη."

For Theodoret, the human soul is in constant suffering, both in itself and together with the body with which it is united. This suffering implies constant change, which cannot be associated with the divine nature. Therefore, his reservations about the use of the body-soul analogy reflect his concern to preserve the immutability of the Logos. Since the main purpose of the Christology of chapter 11 and the supporting analogies is to argue for the immutability of the Logos, it seems hardly surprising that Theodoret did not discuss the identity of the subject in Christ's sufferings.

In chapter 12 Theodoret expands on his explanation of the manner of the union of divinity and humanity in Christ. He begins by restating his feeling of incompetence and confesses that it is ultimately ineffable. Nonetheless, he offers another analogy as more fitting than the previous two. Theodoret's cosmology presupposed existence of primeval light. After the body of the Sun was created, that light was collected and united to the body. Once the union was effected, no one could distinguish the constituent parts, with both the light and body called one Sun. The union of the "true Light" (Logos) and the "holy body" (human nature) is such, inasmuch as both natures are perceived as one and the same [subject]. Theodoret emphasized that after the union there is "one Son, Lord, and Christ the Only-begotten, two natures—the one beyond ours, the other ours . . . no one could separate the operations of the one Sonship, but the properties of the natures can be known."<sup>62</sup>

Theodoret's concern in this chapter is to preserve the unity of the person of Christ while arguing for the distinct properties of the two natures. The existence of both natures in the one person of Christ was necessitated by Theodoret's soteriology, in which the Logos himself was incarnate, united with a human being in order to repay Adam's debt and restore the fallen Protoplast (cf. chapter 10). Thus, Christ was both divine and human. In the union each nature retained its existence, and the weaker human nature was not consumed by the divine nature. This is evident from the Scriptural references to Christ, where Christ exhibited properties of both natures: he performed miracles (divine nature), but he also grew in stature, slept, ate, etc. (human nature). Therefore, the union of the natures cannot be characterized as commingling (σύγχυσις), since properties of both are evident in Christ. Theodoret's argument is that the two natures remain unmixed.

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"Ὅπερ ἐπὶ τῆς θεότητος τοῦ Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἂν τις τῶν εὐσεβῶν τολμήσειεν εἰπεῖν ἢ παραδέξασθαι. Ὡστε τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ παράδειγμα κατὰ τὶ μὲν δεκτέον, κατὰ τὸ λοιπὸν δὲ φευκτέον."

62 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 12 (ibid., 48.): "... εἰς μὲν υἱὸς καὶ κύριος καὶ Χριστὸς καὶ μονογενής, φύσεις δὲ δύο, ἡ μὲν ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς, ἡ δὲ ἡμετέρα . . . ἐνέργειαν οὐκ ἂν τις χωρίσειεν τῆς μίας υἰότητος, τῆς δὲ φύσεως ἥς ἐστὶν οἰκεῖον τὸ γινόμενον τῷ λόγῳ γνωρίσειεν."

The next four chapters (13–17) contain a discussion of the manner of Logos's presence in Christ. Much of the discussion reflects debates with the Apollinarian milieu, e.g., the question of the change of the substance of Christ's body into divine substance (οὐσία) and in what manner the Logos was present in Christ.

In chapter 13 Theodoret opens up the discussion of the union of the Logos with Christ's humanity by treating the question of the Logos's ubiquity and his presence in his "own temple" (Christ's body). The following chapter offers two possible answers to this question: the Logos is present in Christ either accidentally (κατὰ συμβεβηκός) or substantially (κατ' οὐσίαν). Chapters 14 and 15 contain the argument that the Logos was present everywhere by substance (κατ' οὐσίαν), including in his temple/body. However, Theodoret is careful to guard his doctrine from the possible interpretation that Christ's body was somehow changed into divine nature after the union. He says that the body shares in the dignity of God (θεία ἀξία) but is not part of the divine nature, and thus the union of the natures was utterly unconditioned and realized solely by the good pleasure (εὐδοκία) of the Logos.<sup>63</sup> In other words, the body has not been changed but remains human even after entering into the voluntary and unconditioned union with the Godhead initiated by the Logos.

Theodoret turns next to proving that the union of the two natures did not entail the change of substance of the human nature into the substance of the Logos. The opposite process would be inconceivable, since the Godhead is unchangeable by definition, and it has been proven in the Trinitarian portion of the *Expositio* that the Logos is God. Thus, only the human nature could have suffered a change. Yet the argument advanced in the fifteenth chapter is that the substance of Christ's body could not have been changed into the substance of the Logos as a result of the union, since such a change would imply that something was either added to the Godhead or subtracted from it. Moreover, if the body was transformed into the divine substance, then it must have become a substance different from the Father's. This would lead to the logically impossible conclusion that there were two substances in the Logos: one in common with the Father and the other of the body. Theodoret's conclusion is that the substance of Christ's body must have remained fully human. Any change in the substance of the body would have been unnecessary and in vain, since even the new substance would by definition remain in the created order and could not be divine. In other words, Theodoret is arguing that a created nature could not supersede the ontological abyss between the created and uncreated orders and become an uncreated nature. Thus, these chapters are concerned

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63 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 15 (ibid., 56.)

mostly with proving that immutability was a necessary quality of the Logos in the union of divine and human natures in Christ.

In the sixteenth chapter Theodoret sets the stage for the final Christological exposition. He reminds his audience that the mystery of divine things is ultimately unattainable and, despite mankind's best efforts, his understanding of them is uncertain.

In the penultimate chapter Theodoret develops his previous statement that the Logos is by substance concurrently present in his "own temple" and ubiquitous. However, this presence is not experienced equally. The difference in presence is not a matter of quantity, but of the quality of the experience. Just as the Sun shines evenly upon all, so the Logos is equally present in all. However, only those who have clear and healthy eyesight will be able to benefit fully and experience the light coming from the Sun, so also only the purest, sinless body of Christ was able fully to receive the presence of the Logos. The final, eighteenth chapter is a glorification of the divine Logos.

### 3.4 The Theology of the *Expositio rectae fidei*

A comparative study of the theological concerns of the *Expositio rectae fidei* with Basil of Caesarea's *Adversus Eunomium* and Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* points to a considerable amount of common theological material and to many common concerns. As shall be argued below, the two main parts of the *Expositio*—Trinitarian and Christological—reflect debates from an era preceding the Christological debates of the fifth century in which Theodoret played an important role.

#### 3.4.1 *The Theological Lexicon of the Expositio rectae fidei*

Theodoret's theological terminology at the time of the composition of the *Expositio* is rather underdeveloped and inadequate to express fully the complexity of his theological thought. While he demonstrates an impressive grasp of a rich Trinitarian terminology, it is applied only partially to the Christological concepts.

In the Trinitarian section of the *Expositio*, Theodoret uses all the key words of Trinitarian theology of the fourth century, particularly of the Cappadocian variety. He explains that the οὐσία is an underlying substance which connects individual beings. In the case of the Trinity, the substance (οὐσία) is revealed in the name God, while what distinguishes the persons of the Trinity (ὑποστάσεις or πρόσωπα) is their mode of existence (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως): "Just as unbegottenness, begottenness, and procession are not revelatory of the substance (οὐσία),

but designations of the subsistence (ὑπόστασις), we can sufficiently distinguish among the persons (πρόσωπα) and point to the separate subsistences (ὑποστάσεις) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”<sup>64</sup> Elsewhere, in chapter 7, Theodoret says: “it is fitting to confess one God, known in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be subsistences (ὑποστάσεις) of the one Godhead, so we noetically perceive “God” as that which is common to the subsistences.”<sup>65</sup>

As regards the term “nature” (φύσις), in Theodoret’s theological vocabulary it functions as a synonym for “substance” (οὐσία). In chapter 4 one reads: “if a thing exists, it is either of uncreated or created nature.”<sup>66</sup> Later in the same chapter Theodoret substitutes the terms and speaks of “created substance” (ἡ κτιστὴ οὐσία). Evidently, Theodoret uses the two terms, φύσις and οὐσία, interchangeably.<sup>67</sup>

Theodoret had a mastery of theological lexical tools which would have served very well in the Christological arguments. Yet in the Christological section of the *Expositio* he applied only the pair οὐσία/φύσις, and mostly in connection with the Logos *qua* the divine element of Christ, while other technical terms are absent. Although, as evidenced above, Christological equivalents of the Trinitarian concepts existed in Theodoret’s teaching, there is no reference to either ὑπόστασις or πρόσωπον in the Christological lexicon of the *Expositio*.

This shortcoming in no way undermines the integrity of Theodoret’s Christological position, which remains consistent throughout his life. During the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies, Theodoret developed and updated his lexical tools, and yet his Christological position remained essentially unchanged. In the *Expositio rectae fidei* Theodoret shows an acquaintance with the Trinitarian language of an earlier era, but he chooses not to apply the Trinitarian lexicon to his Christological arguments, even when such an

64 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 3 (ibid., 10.): “Ὡστε τὸ ἀγέννητον καὶ τὸ γεννητὸν καὶ τὸ ἐκπορευτὸν οὐκ οὐσίας δηλωτικά, σημαντικά δὲ τῶν ὑποστάσεων ἐστίν· ἱκανὰ γὰρ ἡμῖν διακρίνειν τὰ πρόσωπα καὶ τὴν πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἰδιαζόντως δεικνύειν ὑπόστασιν.”

65 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 7 (ibid., 26.): “Ἐνα τοίνυν θεὸν προσήκεν ὁμολογεῖν, ἐν πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ καὶ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι γνωριζόμενον, ἥ μὲν πατὴρ καὶ υἱὸς καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, τῆς μᾶς θεότητος τὰς ὑποστάσεις γνωρίζοντας, ἥ δὲ θεός, τὸ κατ’ οὐσίαν κοινὸν τῶν ὑποστάσεων νοούντας.”

66 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 4 (ibid., 12.): “εἴ τι γὰρ ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν, ἢ ἄκτιστος φύσις ἐστὶν ἢ κτιστή.”

67 As Guinot noticed, this imprecision in Theodoret’s vocabulary is rather common; cf. *Commentary on Psalms* 109,3 (PG 80.1772 A); *Commentary on the Song of Songs* 3,3–4 (PG 81.116 A–C); *Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians* 1.15 (PG 81.597 B); *Questions on Exodus* 60 (FM 1, p. 141, 2–4). See Guinot, “De quelques réflexions de Théodoret de Cyr sur les notions d’ousia et d’hypostasis,” 200, note 14.

innovation might have served him well. Instead, he chooses to remain deeply traditional and stay faithful to the lexicon of his sources without mixing their terminologies. That is to say he adhered strictly to the Cappadocian terminology in harmony with the intention of the original authors.

### 3.4.2 οὐσία and ὑπόστασις/τρόπος ὑπάρξεως

A considerable number of parallels can be drawn between the Cappadocian works against Eunomius of Cyzicus and Theodoret's *Expositio rectae fidei*. The most striking parallel is the adoption of Cappadocian lexicon and analogies in defending the fullness of the divinity of the Logos and the Holy Spirit. Like the Cappadocians before him, Theodoret in his arguments used the distinction between substance (οὐσία) and mode of existence (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως) or subsistence (ὑπόστασις).

Only two Christian fathers used the phrase “τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως.” Basil of Caesarea used it twice (*Adversus Eunomium* 5; PG 29: 680A and 681C), while Gregory of Nyssa used it three times (*Contra Eunomium* 1.216, 1.496–7, and 3.2.42).

Basil of Caesarea appropriated the distinction between οὐσία and τρόπος ὑπάρξεως/ὑποστάσεως from secular philosophy. F.X. Risch and L. Turcescu identified its philosophical precedents in Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius Constantinopolitanus.<sup>68</sup> Alexander of Aphrodisias used the expression four times in his treatment of the works of Aristotle, while Themistius used the expression only once, again in relation to Aristotle's philosophical system.<sup>69</sup>

Turcescu pointed out that Basil of Caesarea might have known both sources. It is likely that the commentaries of Alexander of Aphrodisias were incorporated into handbooks of philosophy during his formative years.<sup>70</sup> At

68 Franz Xaver Risch, “Kommentar,” in *Pseudo-Basilii, Adversus Eunomium IV–V: Einleitung, Übersetzung und Kommentar, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* 16 (Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill, 1992), 129–30. and Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*. 104 and 50.

69 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Aristotelis topicorum libros octo commentaria*, ed. Maximilianus Wallis, *Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca* 2.2 (Berlin: Reimer, 1891). 179.7 and 295.7 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Aristotelis analyticorum priorum librum I commentarium*, ed. Maximilianus Wallis, *Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca* 2.1 (Berlin: Reimer, 1883). 197.2.; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Aristotelis Metaphysica commentaria* ed. Michael Hayduck, *Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca* 1 (Berlin: Reimer, 1891). 725.7; Themistius Constantinopolitanus, *Quae fertur in Aristotelis Analyticorum priorum librum I paraphrasis*, ed. Maximilianus Wallis, *Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca* 23.3 (Berlin: Reimer, 1884). 29.30.

70 Cf. Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*. 104.

the same time, it cannot be excluded that, Basil at some point studied philosophy under Themistius, who enjoyed the respect of Christians.<sup>71</sup> Nonetheless, as Prestige pointed out, Basil was the first Christian who appropriated the phrase in theological arguments.<sup>72</sup> He was followed in this by Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, who are remarkably consistent in making a distinction between the two concepts.<sup>73</sup>

Theodoret's understanding of the phrase is entirely congruent with that of the Cappadocians, taking it to denote a set of personal characteristics that distinguish individuals of the same species from one other.<sup>74</sup> In Theodoret, subsistence/existence (ὑπόστασις/ὑπαρξίς) does not designate a complete person, but only a constituent part, a *pars pro toto*:

And the term “unbegottenness,” like an imprint, immediately defines the subsistence (ὑπόστασις) of the Father, and again having heard the designation “begotten” it is a sign to begin thinking about the Son, and likewise through the designation of the “one who proceeds” we teach the property (τὸ ἰδικόν) of the person (πρόσωπον) of Spirit. And this is a sufficient proof that the unbegottenness, begottenness, and procession do not present the substance (οὐσία), but are indicators of the subsistence (ὑπόστασις), and they mark out (διασημαίνειν) the mode of existence (τῆς ὑπάρξεως τρόπος).<sup>75</sup>

71 Cf. Everett Ferguson, “Themistius,” in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris (New York: Garland, 1997), 1113; Clifford Ando, “Pagan Apologetics and Christian Intolerance in the Ages of Themistius and Augustine,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4, no. 2 (1996): 171–207.; Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*. 104.

72 See George L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1952). 245.

73 See, for example, Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 21.35 and 40.43. Also, Richard P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318–381* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005). 709–13.; Joseph Lebon, “Le Sort du “Consubstantiel” Nicéen (second part),” *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 48 (1953): 637–38.

74 Cf. Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 3 in Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 8–10.

75 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 3 (ibid., 10.): “Καθάπερ γὰρ σφραγίς ἡμῖν τις λεχθὲν τὸ ἀγέννητον εὐθὺς τὴν πατρὸς ἀφορίζει ὑπόστασιν, καὶ πάλιν ὥς τι σημεῖον τὴν τοῦ γεννητοῦ προσηγορίαν ἀκούοντες τὴν υἱοῦ λαμβάνομεν ἔννοιαν, καὶ αὖθις διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἐκπορευτοῦ σημασίας τὸ ἰδικόν τοῦ πνεύματος πρόσωπον παιδευόμεθα. Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἀρκεῖ πρὸς ἀπόδειξιν τοῦ μὴ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτὴν δηλοῦν τὸ ἀγέννητον καὶ γεννητὸν καὶ ἐκπορευτὸν, ἀφοριστικὰ δὲ τῶν ὑποστάσεων εἶναι, πρὸς τῷ καὶ τὸν τῆς ὑπάρξεως τρόπον διασημαίνειν.”



As L. Turcescu argued convincingly, the phrase is found in Basil of Ceasarea and Gregory of Nyssa with an identical meaning.<sup>76</sup> Defending the divinity of the Logos, Basil explains that the differences in the modes of existence (τρόποι τῆς ὑπάρξεως) of the persons of the Holy Trinity (unbegottenness, generation, procession) do not imply difference in substance (οὐσία). Throughout his work against Eunomius, Basil used ὑπόστασις as synonym for the ὑπαρξίς (e.g., *Adversus Eunomium* 1.15): *how God is* and not *what He is*. Therefore, for him the phrase τρόπος ὑπάρξεως/ὑποστάσεως pertains to individuating characteristics and thus is not synonymous with God's nature or substance.<sup>77</sup> In support of his claim, Basil used the example of Adam and Abel.<sup>78</sup> Adam was not born, but was created directly by God. His sons, however, were born of him. Thus, Adam was unbegotten, while his sons were generated, and yet they shared the same substance, i.e., humanity. Their difference is thus not in substance but in individual characteristics pertaining to the modes of existence (τρόποι ὑπάρξεως/ὑποστάσεως). The analogy was then used to defend the divinity of the Logos and explain that despite Father's unbegottenness and Son's generation, they still shared the same substance (οὐσία)—Godhead.

Basil's specific definition of the term ὑπόστασις is found in *Ep.* 236, where he affirms that:

The distinction between 'ousia' and 'hypostasis' is the same as that between the general and the particular; as, for instance, between the animal [i.e., ζῶον—the living being] and the particular man. Wherefore, in the case of Godhead, we confess one essence or substance so as not to give a variant definition of existence, but we confess a particular hypostasis, in order that our conception of Father, Son and Holy Spirit may be without confusion and clear.<sup>79</sup>

76 Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*. 103–06.

77 For a helpful analysis of the phrase see: *ibid.*, 105.

78 Basil of Caesarea, *Adversus Eunomium* 5 (PG 29: 680A and 681C): “Τῶν γεννητῶν ἡ αὐτὴ φύσις πρὸς τὸν γεννήσαντα, καὶ ἐτέρως ὁ γεννηθεὶς τὸ εἶναι ἔχει. Οὐδὲ γὰρ Ἀβελ, ὁ ἐκ συνδυασμοῦ γεννηθεὶς, ἕτερος παρὰ τὸν Ἀδὰμ, τοῦ Ἀδὰμ μὴ γεννηθέντος ἀλλὰ πλασθέντος. Εἰ τὸ αἴτιον τοῦ αἰτιατοῦ μείζον καὶ διάφορον κατ’ οὐσίαν, πᾶς δὲ πατὴρ αἴτιος, καὶ πᾶς υἱὸς αἰτιατός, μείζους καὶ διάφοροι κατ’ οὐσίαν οἱ πατέρες τῶν υἱῶν, καὶ οὐ μίας οὐσίας. Ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἀληθές . . . Εἰ ἀγέννητον τὸν Πατέρα καὶ γεννητὸν τὸν Υἱὸν εἰπὼν τις, τὰς οὐσίας ἐδήλωσε, τὸν τρόπον τῆς ὑπάρξεως αὐτῶν εἰπεῖν τις θελήσας, πῶς ἂν ἐτέρως εἰπεῖν δυνήσεται ἢ οὕτως; Ὑπάρξεως οὖν τρόπος τὸ ἀγέννητος, καὶ οὐκ οὐσίας ὄνομα.” Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*. 103–6.

79 Basil of Caesarea, *Epistle* 236.6 (ET from NPNF<sup>2</sup> 8.278; Greek in PG 32, 884 A; Saint Basile, *Lettres*, trans. Yves Courtonne, vol. 3, Collection des universités de France: Publiée



In *Contra Eunomium* Gregory followed Basil's argument distinguishing between the substance and modes of existence (τρόποι τῆς ὑπάρξεως) in the Holy Trinity:

The first man and the one sprung from him, though they get their being in a different way from each other, the one by the coupling of parents, the other by shaping (διάπλασις) from the dust, are both believed to be two and in terms of substance (ἡ οὐσία) are not split from each other . . . Both former and the latter are human . . . If then the word humanity is not altered in the case of Adam and Abel by the change in the way they are generated, since neither the order nor the mode of their existence (ὁ τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως) imports any change in nature (ἡ φύσις), but by the common consent of sober men their state is the same, and no one would deny this unless he is badly in need of hellebore, what necessity is there to argue this unreasonable conclusion in the case of the divine nature?<sup>80</sup>

Not only the identical theological argument, but also Theodoret's accompanying terminology seems to reflect that of the great Cappadocian brothers.<sup>81</sup>

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sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé (Paris: Société d'édition "Les belles lettres", 1966). 53.): "Οὐσία δὲ καὶ ὑπόστασις ταύτην ἔχει διαφοράν, ἣν ἔχει τὸ κοινὸν πρὸς τὸ καθ' ἑκάστον· οἷον ὡς ἔχει τὸ ζῶον πρὸς δεῖνα ἄνθρωπον. Διὰ τοῦτο οὐσίαν μὲν μίαν ἐπὶ τῆς θεότητος ὁμολογοῦμεν ὥστε τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον μὴ διαφορῶς ἀποδιδόναι· ὑπόστασιν δὲ ἰδιάζουσαν, ἵν' ἀσύγχυτος ἦμιν καὶ τετρανωμένη ἡ περὶ Πατρός καὶ Υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἔννοια ἐνυπάρχη." The same distinction is repeated in *Ep.* 38 (PG 32.328; Saint Basile, *Lettres*, trans. Yves Courtonne, vol. 1, Collection des universités de France: Publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé (Paris: Société d'édition "Les belles lettres", 1957). 82–83.): "Τοῦτο οὖν ἐστὶν ἡ ὑπόστασις, οὐχ ἡ ἀόριστος τῆς οὐσίας ἔννοια μηδεμίαν ἐκ τῆς κοινότητος τοῦ σηματομενομένου στάσιν εὐρίσκουσα, ἀλλ' ἡ τὸ κοινὸν τε καὶ ἀπερίγραφτον ἐν τῷ τινὶ πράγματι διὰ τῶν ἐπιφανομένων ἰδιωμάτων παριστώσα καὶ περιγράφουσα . . ." See also *Adversus Eunomium* 1.10; 2.28, 4. Gregory of Nazianus follows Basil in *Orat.* 33.16.

80 Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 1.496–7 (*Gregorii Nysseni opera*, W. Jaeger, ed. vol. 1.1. Leiden: Brill, 1960; ET from Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*. 105–6.). "Ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος καὶ ὁ ἐξ ἐκείνου γεγωνὶς διαφορῶς ἑκάτεροι τὸ εἶναι ἔχοντες, ὁ μὲν ἐκ συνδυασμοῦ τῶν γονέων, ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆς τοῦ χροῦ διαπλάσεως, καὶ δύο εἶναι πιστεύονται καὶ τῷ λόγῳ τῆς οὐσίας ἀπ' ἀλλήλων οὐ διασχίζονται . . . ἄνθρωπος γὰρ καὶ οὗτος κάκεῖνος . . . εἰ οὖν ὁ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος λόγος ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἀδάμ καὶ τοῦ Ἀβελ τῷ παρηλλαγμένῳ τῆς γεννήσεως οὐχ ὑπαλλάσσεται, οὐδεμίαν οὐτε τῆς τάξεως οὐτε τοῦ τρόπου τῆς ὑπάρξεως τῇ φύσει τὴν παραλλαγὴν ἐμποιοῦντων, ἀλλ' ὡσαύτως ἔχειν τῇ κοινῇ τῶν νηφόντων συγκαταθέσει διωμολόγηται καὶ οὐδεὶς ἂν ἀντίποι τοῦτω μὴ σφόδρα τοῦ ἐλλεβόρου δεόμενος, τίς ἡ ἀνάγκη κατὰ τῆς θείας φύσεως τὸ παράλογον τοῦτο τῆς ἐννοίας κατασκευάζεσθαι;"

81 Theodoret's Trinitarian language is more akin to that of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa than to that of Gregory of Nazianzus. For example, the Trinitarian language

In describing the fashioning of the Protoplast, Theodoret used the term shaping/fashioning (διάπλασις), which appears both in Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* 1.496–7 and in Basil's *Adversus Eunomium*. However, it is Basil's passage that bears a particular similarity to Theodoret's:

Whoever says that being 'without origin' is the substance equates himself with someone who, when asked, "What is the substance of Adam? What is his nature?" replies that he is not formed from copulation of a man and a woman, but rather by the divine hand (τῆς θείας χειρὸς διαπλασθῆναι). The recipient of such a reply may object: "I am not seeking the manner of his subsistence but rather the material substrate of the man himself. Your response has not answered my question." So, then, that is how it is for those of us who have learned from the term 'unbegotten' what God is like rather than his very nature.<sup>82</sup>

Theodoret follows this in *Expositio rectae fidei* 3:

The one who looks into the existence of Adam, how his being was brought forth, will find him not begotten, not from some other man, but that he was fashioned by the divine hand (τῆς θείας διαπλασθέντα χειρὸς). But, the shaping (διάπλασις) reveals the mode of existence... If, on the one hand, you seek his substance (οὐσία) by which he is joined to those [who came forth] from him, you will find man underlying. Just as the fashioning reveals the mode of existence (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως), and the mode of existence (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως) characterizes the shaping (διάπλασις), and the word substance (οὐσία) shows an underlying man...<sup>83</sup>

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of Gregory of Nazianzus contains the terms substance, nature, person, but he does not use modes of existence to designate the peculiarities in the Trinity. As J.N.D. Kelly has noted, he prefers particularizing characteristics or identifying peculiarities. (Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*. 264–65.)

82 Basil of Caesarea, *Adversus Eunomium* 1.15 (PG 29: 548; ET from St. Basil of Caesarea, *Against Eunomius*, trans. Mark DelCogliano and Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 122 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2011). 114–15.): "τίς ἡ τοῦ Ἀδάμ οὐσία, καὶ τίς ἡ φύσις αὐτῶ; ὁ δὲ ἀποκρίνοίτο, μὴ ἐκ συνδυασμοῦ ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς θείας χειρὸς διαπλασθῆναι. Ἀλλ' οὐχὶ τὸν τρόπον τῆς ὑποστάσεως ἐπιζητῶ, φήσειεν ἄν τις, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον· ὁ πολλοὺ δέω μανθάνειν διὰ τῆς ἀποκρίσεως. Τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἡμῖν συμβαίνει ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ἀγεννήτου φωνῆς τὸ ὅπως τοῦ Θεοῦ μᾶλλον ἢ αὐτὴν τὴν φύσιν διδασκομένους."

83 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 3, (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 8–10.: 'Ὁ περὶ τῆς ὑπάρξεως τοῦ Ἀδάμ σκοπούμενος, ὅπως εἰς τὸ εἶναι παρήχθη, εὐρήσει τοῦτον οὐ γεννητόν, οὐ γὰρ ἐξ ἄλλου τινὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς θείας διαπλασθέντα χειρὸς. Ἀλλ' ἡ

### 3.4.3 *The Philosophical Background of οὐσία in the Expositio rectae fidei*

It was mentioned previously that Theodoret in chapters 8 and 9 of the *Expositio* affirmed the absolute transcendence of divine substance, which evades human comprehension. Theodoret makes explicit that: “It would be impossible to any man to reach that first (πρώτη) and blessed substance (οὐσία).”<sup>84</sup> While this statement is in line with the Cappadocian understanding of God, the philosophical and theological provenance of this passage is not self-evident.<sup>85</sup>

The philosophical categorization and the choice of terminology suggest Aristotelian influence and the differentiation between two categories of substance: the first/primary and second(ary) substance.<sup>86</sup> Aristotle’s *Categories* entered Christian theological discourse only in the mid-fourth century, as Stead argued, after it “began to be noticed by Arian logicians.”<sup>87</sup> Following Stead, Turcescu identified Aristotelian influences in Gregory of Nyssa’s *Against Eunomius* 1.172–176; 2.237; 3.10.50.<sup>88</sup> In the last passage Gregory even mentions the *Categories* by name: “He who laboriously reiterates against our argument the Aristotelian division of existent things, has elaborated “genera,” and “species,” and “differentiæ,” and “individuals,” and advanced all the technical

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διάπλασις τὸν τρόπον τῆς ὑπάρξεως δηλοῖ... Εἰ δὲ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ ζητοίης, καθ’ ἣν τοῖς ἐξ αὐτοῦ πρὸς κοινωνίαν συνάπτεται, ἄνθρωπον εὐρήσεις τὸ ὑποκείμενον. Ὡςπερ οὖν ἡ πλάσις τὸν τρόπον τῆς ὑπάρξεως δηλοῖ, ὁ δὲ τῆς ὑπάρξεως τρόπος τὴν διάπλασιν χαρακτηρίζει, ὁ δὲ τῆς οὐσίας λόγος ἄνθρωπον τὸ ὑποκείμενον δείκνυσιν...).

84 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 8 (ibid., 28.): “Οὐδενὶ οὖν ἂν τρόπῳ ἀνθρώποις οὖσιν δυνατὸν ἐξικέσθαι τῆς πρώτης ἐκείνης καὶ μακαρίας οὐσίας.”

85 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 28.17 (48). See also: Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy*, 318–381. 676–737.

86 Aristotle, *Cat.* 2a11–18 (Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols., Bollingen Series LXXI (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). vol. 1.): “A substance (οὐσία)—that which is called a substance most strictly, primarily and most of all—is that which is neither said of a subject, e.g., the individual man (ὁ τίς ἄνθρωπος) or individual horse (ὁ τίς ἵππος). The species in which the things primarily called substances are called “secondary substances” (δεύτεραι οὐσίαι), as also are the genera of these species. For example, the individual man belongs in a species, man, and animal (ζῷον) is genus of the species; so these—both man and animal—are called secondary substances.”

87 Christopher Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). 159. As Turcescu noted, this appears to be a correction of Stead’s previous view that, with the exception of Hippolytus (*Refutation of All Heresies* vii.16–18), Christians did not know the difference between primary and secondary substances before the end of the fourth century. Cf. Christopher Stead, *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). 114–18.; Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*. 129.

88 Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*. 28–29.

language of the categories for the injury of our doctrines.”<sup>89</sup> Both Moreschini and Turcescu argue that Gregory appropriated the Aristotelian distinction between substance and accidents and applied it to Christian Trinitarian theology.<sup>90</sup>

The breadth of Theodoret’s general education points clearly to a familiarity with Aristotle’s philosophy either directly or through Porphyry’s *Isagoge* and the Iamblichan school at Apamea.<sup>91</sup> His familiarity with the basic concepts could have come directly from his knowledge of the *Categories*, since, as mentioned above, these were a tessera in the complex mosaic of debates with theologians of Arian provenance in the previous generation. However, given the overall indebtedness of Theodoret to Cappadocian Trinitarian theology and the fact that it was exclusively in this context that Theodoret used the Aristotelian categories in the *Expositio rectae fidei*, the most likely inspiration for their use was Gregory of Nyssa’s *Contra Eunomium*.

### 3.4.4 φύσις

It was also mentioned above that in the *Expositio rectae fidei* the term “nature” (φύσις) is synonymous with substance (οὐσία). This is evident from the passage from chapter 4 quoted above. The same discussion is expounded upon in chapter 7, where Theodoret consistently uses the term “nature” for the two orders of existence—created and uncreated—where previously he had used the term “substance.” The identification of substance and nature is repeated in the opening of the chapter 5, where it is said that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united by a common nature, while the predominant term to describe

89 NPNF<sup>2</sup> 5, 247; L. Turcescu, in his rendering of the text, rightly capitalized the word “categories,” since it is a clear reference to Aristotle’s work (cf. *Ibid.*, 29.).

90 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Teologia trinitaria. Contro Eunomio. Confutazione della Professione di fede di Eunomio*, trans. Claudio Moreschini (Milano: Rusconi, 1994). 587 n. 56.; Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*. 29.

91 On Porphyry’s *Isagoge* as a possible vehicle conveying Aristotle’s philosophy into Christian discourse see Christopher Stead, “Individual Personality in Origen and the Cappadocian Fathers,” in *Arché e telos: l’antropologia di Origene e di Gregorio di Nissa. Analisi storico-religiosa*, ed. U. Bianchi and Henri Crouzel (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1981), 182.; Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*. 82ff.; Herman J. Vogt, “Die Schrift *Ex communibus notionibus* des Gregor von Nyssa: Übersetzung des kritischen Textes mit Kommentar,” *Theologische Quartalschrift* 171 (1991): 204 n. 1.; David L. Balás, “*Plenitudo humanitatis*: The Unity of Human Nature in the Theology of Gregory of Nyssa,” in *Disciplina nostra: Essays in Memory of Robert F. Evans*, ed. Donald F. Winslow (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979), 129.; cf. Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*. 29.

“the common” among the persons of the Trinity is substance. In this identification of nature and substance, Theodoret is deeply traditional, following the Cappadocians.<sup>92</sup>

Theodoret’s “master,” Theodore of Mopsuestia, had a rather fluid understanding of the term. As Sullivan noted, in Theodore’s mind “nature” designates a “concrete reality, as opposed to something that is unreal.”<sup>93</sup> For instance, commenting on Heb 1:2, Theodore says that God is “not literally creator of ‘ages’ since an ‘age’ is a mere interval of time and not a φύσις.”<sup>94</sup> Also, Theodore says that the appearance of the Holy Spirit at Christ’s baptism in the Jordan was an apparition and not a φύσις.<sup>95</sup> However, Sullivan argued that in Theodore’s Trinitarian arguments the term nature is synonymous with substance (οὐσία).<sup>96</sup> For example, in the *Commentary on the Prophet Haggai* Theodore states that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share a common substance.<sup>97</sup> In the *Commentary on John*, however, one finds a reference to the “communion of nature between the Father and the Son.”<sup>98</sup> However, in the Christological discussions, nature is used principally to denote a reality of a particular kind. Sullivan noted that in Theodore’s terminology the expression “human nature” does not designate humanity as a species, but refers to the “concrete individual human nature assumed by the Word.”<sup>99</sup> Further, McLeod shows that Theodore preferred the term nature over substance for the same concept in his Christological discourse.<sup>100</sup> Theodore’s fluid use of nature

92 Cf., for example, Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* 1.18; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 23.10; Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 1.182; 2.237.

93 Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*. 203.

94 Ibid. and Karl Staab, *Pauluskommentare aus der Griechischen Kirche: aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1933). 201, lines 9–10.

95 Robert Devreese, *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*, Studi e testi 141 (Citta del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1948). 317, line 17. and Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*. 203. Sullivan argued that Theodore also used the term to denote a “kind” or “species” (ibid.). He gave as an example for his argument, Theodore’s affirmation that at the wedding in Cana of Galilee Christ not merely changed water into wine, but into the marvelous φύσις of wine. This argument is in need of further support, since in this statement Theodoret might have simply emphasized the reality of the change as opposed to a mere visual or gustatory experience.

96 Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*. 204.

97 Ibid.

98 Devreese, *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*. 390, lines 8–9.

99 Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*. 204–05.

100 Frederick G. McLeod, *The Roles of Christ’s Humanity for Salvation: Insights from Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005). 150.

cannot be found in Theodoret's *Expositio*. There the term nature is used exclusively as a synonym for substance. Moreover, in Theodoret the term does not have the connotation of a concrete individual existence, but is used liberally to denote broad concepts such as "order of existence," as for example in chapter 4 of the *Expositio*, where it is stated that: "... we will find everything divided into the [categories of] created and uncreated. If a thing exists, it is either of uncreated or created nature," or "one must see to it not to join the Son and the Spirit to created nature."<sup>101</sup> Moreover, in the *Expositio* the expression "human nature" has been used to denote humanity as a species: "equally one is the Son, Lord, and Christ the Only-begotten, two natures—the one [nature] beyond ours, the other ours (i.e., human nature)."<sup>102</sup>

Thus, both Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrrhus follow Cappadocian theological terminology. Bearing in mind that Theodoret openly acknowledges a certain indebtedness to Theodore, whom he calls "teacher," one cannot exclude the possibility that he discovered Cappadocian theology through him. However, Theodoret does not follow Theodore blindly, and certain differences are evident in their respective definitions of the term "nature". It has a more stable definition in Theodoret, where it is used in the very broad sense of substance, while in Theodore it has been narrowed down to connote an individual reality.

### 3.4.5 πρόσωπον

In Cappadocian Trinitarian theology the term πρόσωπον was used in relation to the divine persons recognized in the Holy Trinity. The term denotes individually subsistent entities united by the same divine substance/nature (οὐσία/φύσις), so that one God is recognized.

Theodoret appropriated this Cappadocian understanding of the term πρόσωπον. In the *Expositio rectae fidei* 3, Theodoret says that because of the difference in the modes of existence of the Trinity, which designate the respective hypostases, the persons can be distinguished.<sup>103</sup> In chapter 5, Theodoret even

101 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 4 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 12.): "Εὐρήσομεν γάρ ἅπαντα εἷς τε κτιστὸν καὶ ἄκτιστον διαιρούμενα· εἴ τι γὰρ ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν, ἢ ἄκτιστος φύσις ἔστιν ἢ κτιστή" and "Ἀλλ' ὅτι μὲν οὐ συνέζευκται τῇ κτιστῇ φύσει ὁ υἱὸς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα, ἀπὸ τούτων καὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἰστέον." The same use of the term is repeated throughout chapter 7 (cf. *Ibid.*, 22–26.).

102 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 12 (*ibid.*, 48.): "οὕτω κἀναναῦθα εἷς μὲν υἱὸς καὶ κύριος καὶ Χριστὸς καὶ μονογενής, φύσει δὲ δύο, ἡ μὲν ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς, ἡ δὲ ἡμετέρα."

103 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 3 (*ibid.*, 10.): "Ὡστε τὸ ἀγέννητον καὶ τὸ γεννητὸν καὶ τὸ ἐκπορευτὸν οὐκ οὐσίας δηλωτικά, σημαντικά δὲ τῶν ὑποστάσεών ἐστιν· ἱκανὰ γὰρ ἡμῖν διακρίνειν τὰ πρόσωπα..."

argues that the teaching about the three persons is attested by Holy Scripture, and especially by the Apostle Paul: “Behold, while remembering the divine indwelling, he [Paul] has in mind the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And in all the teaching that he constructs, the three persons (πρόσωπα) are revealed.”<sup>104</sup>

The Cappadocian understanding of the terms is most evident in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa, while Gregory of Nazianzus seems to be rather inconsistent in his use of them.<sup>105</sup> A. Louth argued that the two concepts are interchangeable in Cappadocian Trinitarian lexicon.<sup>106</sup> However, Prestige has noticed that the mode of existence does not constitute a person in its totality, but was only a part of the definition of person.<sup>107</sup> Following him, L. Turcescu convincingly demonstrated that in the Cappadocian Trinitarian lexicon the term ὑπόστασις does not designate a full person (πρόσωπον), but only its characteristic parts, which distinguish one person from others who share the same substance/nature (οὐσία/φύσις).<sup>108</sup> Thus, the Cappadocian understanding of person is that it is a combination of “substance and mode of existence and power and so on and so forth.”<sup>109</sup>

Following the Cappadocians, Theodoret does not confuse πρόσωπον with ὑπόστασις. This is evident in the distinction between the terms made in the *Expositio rectae fidei* 3. There, Theodoret equates hypostasis with the

104 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 5: “Ἰδοὺ γὰρ πάλιν ἐνοικήσεως θείας μνημονεύων πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα συμπεριλαμβάνων δείκνυται. Καὶ πανταχοῦ δὲ τῆς διδασκαλίας συντάττων τὰ τρία φαίνεται πρόσωπα.”

105 Gregory of Nazianzus in the *Oration* 39.11 says that in God there are: “...Three Individualities or Hypostases, if any prefer so to call them, or persons, for we will not quarrel about names so long as the syllables amount to the same meaning” (NPNF<sup>2</sup> 7.355) (PG 36.345: “ἐνὶ φωτὶ περιαστράφητε καὶ τρισὶ· τρισὶ μὲν, κατὰ τὰς ιδιότητας, εἴτουν ὑποστάσεις, εἴ τιτι φίλον καλεῖν, εἴτε πρόσωπα (οὐδὲν γὰρ περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων ζυγομαχῆσομεν, ἕως ἂν πρὸς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν αἱ συλλαβαὶ φέρωσιν”). However, in this oration Gregory attempted to explain to the newly baptized Christians the existence of the three distinct persons in God, and the precision of theological language was not his primary concern. As both K. Holl and R.P.C. Hanson have observed, Gregory prefers πρόσωπον to ὑπόστασις. His understanding of the latter term is weak and could be compared to “a mere point or moment in the Godhead” (cf. Karl Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium in seinem Verhältnis zu den grossen Kappadoziern* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (P. Siebeck), 1904). 177.; Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy*, 318–381. 709.)

106 Andrew Louth, “They Speak to Us Across Centuries. 4. St. Maximus the Confessor,” *The Expository Times* 109, no. 4 (1998): 103.

107 Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*. 245–49.

108 Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons*. 103–06.

109 *Ibid.*, 104.



individual property of each divine prosopon. Thus, prosopon here functions as a broader term, of which hypostasis is a constituent part.<sup>110</sup>

### 3.5 Theodoret, Theodore and the Cappadocian Lexicon in the *Expositio rectae fidei*

It is evident that the theological lexicon of the *Expositio rectae fidei* is deeply rooted in the Cappadocian tradition, but the question of the provenance of this influence remains.<sup>111</sup> Did the Cappadocians influence Theodoret directly or via Theodore of Mopsuestia, whom Theodoret himself refers to as “teacher?”<sup>112</sup>

As previously demonstrated, the theological content of the *Expositio rectae fidei* has two foci: Trinitarian and Christological. In the Trinitarian section,

110 Cf. Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 3: “And the term “unbegottenness,” like an imprint, immediately defines the subsistence (ὑπόστασις) of the Father, and again having heard the designation “begotten” it is a sign to begin thinking about the Son, and likewise through the designation of the “one who proceeds” we teach the property (τὸ ἰδικόν) of the person (πρόσωπον) of Spirit.” Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 10.: “Καθάπερ γὰρ σφραγίς ἡμῖν τις λεχθὲν τὸ ἀγέννητον εὐθὺς τὴν πατρὸς ἀφορίζει ὑπόστασιν, καὶ πάλιν ὡς τι σημεῖον τὴν τοῦ γεννητοῦ προσηγορίαν ἀκούοντες τὴν υἱοῦ λαμβάνομεν ἔννοιαν, καὶ αὐθις διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἐκπορευτοῦ σημασίας τὸ ἰδικόν τοῦ πνεύματος πρόσωπον παιδευόμεθα.”

111 See also Guinot, “De quelques réflexions de Théodoret de Cyr sur les notions d'*ousia* et d'*hypostasis*,” esp. 205.

112 In the *Ep.* 16 “To Bishop Irenaeus” (Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 1–95. 58–61.), Theodoret says that both Diodore and Theodore are numbered in the “catalogue of teachers.” Based on this reference, some scholars argue that Theodoret did indeed study directly under Theodore’s supervision. However, there is no evidence for such a claim. (Cf. Lenain de Tillemont, *Memoires pour servir à l’histoire ecclesiastique des six premiers siecles. Justifiez par les citations des auteurs originaux: avec des notes pour éclaircir les difficultez des faits & de la chronologie.* xv. 868–69.). As Stewardson rightly noted, Theodoret’s reference in *Ep.* 16 is a generic reference to the theological authority that the two theologians enjoyed; namely, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Diodore had been set as a standard of orthodoxy by the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 and Theodore of Mopsuestia’s biblical commentaries earned him universal recognition and the title “The Interpreter” (Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Erastes*,” 4.). Thus, it is not surprising that Theodoret referred to them as “teachers,” which as Bardy, Tillemont, and recently Clayton have noted, does not imply a direct relationship (Bardy, “Théodoret,” col. 299.; Lenain de Tillemont, *Memoires pour servir à l’histoire ecclesiastique des six premiers siecles. Justifiez par les citations des auteurs originaux: avec des notes pour éclaircir les difficultez des faits & de la chronologie.* xv. 868–69.; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451).* 10.).



Theodoret is concerned with proving the divinity of the Holy Trinity: the individuating differences between the persons of the Trinity do not necessarily imply difference in substance, but the Son and Holy Spirit are God because they share the substance of the Father and their individual characteristics pertain to their respective subsistences (ὑποστάσεις).

The Christological portion is an organic continuation of the Trinitarian discourse which attempts to explain the subsistence of divine and human natures in the one person (πρόσωπον) of Jesus Christ. The union of divinity and humanity is explained as “utter union” (ἄκρα ἔνωσις), which results in one person (πρόσωπον) with two substances (οὐσίαι) or natures (φύσεις). This union could not have been according to substance, since divinity and humanity belong respectively to different orders of existence, the created and uncreated natures, which, as Theodoret repeats throughout the treatise, cannot mingle, for a “semi-created” order of existence is a logical impossibility. The Logos dwells in the body “not by nature but by good pleasure” (εὐδοκία). This, however, does not imply a loose or a merely moral union of divinity and humanity in Christ, for Theodoret’s purpose here is to exclude any notion of the necessity of the union, while effectively guarding against the Eunomian notion of the union by activity (ἐνέργεια).

As M.R. Barnes has pointed out, an important Eunomian doctrine was the notion that every activity is temporal in duration and it causes an effect, which lasts only as long as the activity lasts.<sup>113</sup> The effect exists concurrently with its causal activity. This activity was understood to have received no traits from its οὐσία and was thus unable to transmit attributes of the οὐσία to the effect.<sup>114</sup> This is the reason why Theodoret could not have allowed the union to be defined according to ἐνέργεια, since it would effectively disqualify the notion of a real union of divinity and humanity in Christ and would be prone to misinterpretation as a merely peripheral conjunction. If the Logos were present in the body only according to activity, a notion of temporality would be introduced into the union, with the result that hypothetically the union could be dissolved. As shall become clear from an analysis of the *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas of Cyril*, another early work containing substantial Christological material which predates the outbreak of the Christological controversy, Theodoret’s doctrine would not allow for such a possibility: Christ’s body was properly of the Logos, and after the Resurrection it received certain attributes

113 Michel R. Barnes, “The Background and Use of Eunomius’ Causal Language,” in *Arianism after Arius*, ed. Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 218.

114 Cf. Eunomius of Cyzikus, *Apology* 23. 13–15 and 24. 3–4; cf. *Ibid.*

of the divine nature.<sup>115</sup> Thus, the union could not have been by activity; it had to be stronger.<sup>116</sup> As J. Dewart has argued convincingly, good pleasure (εὐδοκία) was the most appropriate lexical tool of the era predating the Nestorian controversy to describe the organic union of divinity and humanity in Christ.<sup>117</sup> Such a union would denote a truly personal unity, since within the boundaries of the Stoic philosophical framework to which Theodoret was indebted “will and activity constituted what we call personality.” The taint of temporality that the Eunomian theology cast on the term activity necessitated a reinforced description of the union of the natures in Christ. The term εὐδοκία was singularly appropriate to demonstrate a full “personal” union; namely, if the union of natures was according to activity (which is self-evident in the biblical witness), and was also according to will (i.e., good pleasure), then the union was personal. Therefore, the union κατ’εὐδοκίαν functioned in Theodoret, as in Theodore of Mopsuestia, as an expression correcting the Eunomian proposal and arguing for a union of the two natures in the one person of Christ.

Thus, Theodoret affirms that there are two *substances* or *natures* present in Christ and each retains its full properties. In the union the Logos takes full humanity—both body and a rational soul—in order to effect the restoration of the human race by repaying Adam’s transgression as a perfect specimen of humanity. Theodoret concludes that the union of the Logos and the human nature ought not be conceived of as a matter of quantity, but as a matter of quality of experience.

The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia, whom Theodoret admiringly calls “teacher,” reveals many common points with the *Expositio rectae fidei*. Theodore, like Theodoret, worked within the framework of Cappadocian

115 In the *Refutation of the Seventh Anathema*, Theodoret says that by virtue of the union with the divine nature, Christ’s human nature was raised from the dead, carried into heaven, and received immortality from the divine nature (Cf. ET in Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 173–74.).

116 It is interesting to note that J. Dewart argued that in the era predating the Nestorian controversy union according to good pleasure (εὐδοκία) was the most appropriate lexical tool to describe the organic union of divinity and humanity in Christ. Such a union would denote a truly personal unity, since within the boundaries of the Stoic philosophical framework will and activity constituted what we call personality (Joanne M. Dewart, “The Notion of ‘Person’ Underlying the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia,” in *Studia Patristica 12, part 1* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975), 199–207., esp. 207). However, Dewart seems to have discounted the import of the connotations, since such an understanding of person would be open to the criticism of introducing temporality in the union of Christ due to the use of activity by Eunomius.

117 Ibid.

Trinitarian theology. The lexicon of his discourse remains within the boundaries of the Cappadocian tradition. Lacking Christological lexical tools, Theodore explains Incarnation as indwelling (ἐνοίκησις), and likens Christ's body to a "garment" in which the Logos dwells as in a temple.<sup>118</sup> Theodore believed that the indwelling was not according to substance (οὐσία) or activity (ἐνέργεια) (since God is so present everywhere), but the Logos was present in the assumed man according to good pleasure (κατ' εὐδοκίαν).<sup>119</sup> Kelly rightly pointed out that Theodore's conception of the Incarnation was in terms of a special indwelling of the Logos in the assumed man: while God dwells in and aids all humans "by his loving disposition," he dwelt in Christ as "in a son." The difference of dwelling was conceived of as one of both quality and quantity. It is here that Theodoret corrects the great "teacher." He thinks of the indwelling not in terms of quantity, but quality: God is equally present in all his creation, but it is the personal ability to experience him that conditions his presence in individuals. Theodore's scheme puts the emphasis on the disposition of God, while for Theodoret God's activity is universally uniform and the experience of God is a matter of personal aptitude.

Theodore of Mopsuestia also speaks of the union of the Logos and the human nature as συνάφεια which produced one person, "one Son."<sup>120</sup> However, like Theodoret, he affirms that the Scriptural witness applies predications appropriate for the respective natures "as to a single πρόσωπον."<sup>121</sup> In Theodoret, the term designates an indissoluble union without commingling.

Theodoret uses the term συνάφεια three times in the *Expositio rectae fidei*. Throughout the work, the term is used twice in the Trinitarian context denoting the union between the three divine persons and once to explain the closeness of the union between soul and body in humans.

In chapter 5 of the *Expositio*, Theodoret uses the term to designate the closest possible union between the persons of the Trinity. After demonstrating what is different in the persons, he turns to showing what is common between them. It is in the latter context that he uses the term συνάφεια: "And behold the utter conjunction (ἄκρα συναφείας) into which he [Paul] places the marks of

118 *Comm. in ps.* 44.9 and *Hom. cat.* 8.5 (Devreese, *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*. 11.). See also Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*. 304–05.

119 *De incarn.* 7 (Theodoret of Cyrillus, ed. *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni: in epistolas B. Pauli commentarii; The Latin Version with the Greek Fragments*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1880–1882), 293.)

120 *Hom. cat.* 5.7; *De incarn.* 11 (ibid., 302.) and *Fragment In ep. ad Rom.* (PG 67, 601). See also Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*. 306.

121 *Hom. cat* 6, 6; 8, 11f; 3, 10. Cf. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*. 307.

distinction [of the persons].”<sup>122</sup> At the end of the paragraph Theodoret clarifies that such a unity is indivisible: “... it is easy to ascertain the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, [through which] it built the indivisible (ἀχώριστον) notion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”<sup>123</sup>

*Expositio* 7 explains that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are adjoined (συντέτακται) by the common divine substance. Further, Theodoret says, “the reason/cause of this union (σύνταξις) is nothing else but the very same substance of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And let my opponent search for exactness in the response, once he has taken into consideration the differentiation, and he will discover the substance in the category of συνάφεια.”<sup>124</sup>

The final use of the term is anthropological. Theodoret’s understanding is that the human body and soul are connected by way of συνάφεια. However, the product of that union is a new entity—a human person. While the body and the soul retain their respective natural properties in the union (which is evident at the end of human life, when the soul does not perish with the body but remains immortal), they still cannot be distinguished. A human person cannot be properly called “body” or “soul,” since it is both. Theodoret is explicit: “Although he [man] is created out of soul and body, he is not identified with either of these, but is something else, since the συνάφεια of the soul with the body in man is such that it creates a third thing.”<sup>125</sup>

It is important to note that in the *Expositio* the union of divinity and humanity in Christ is not defined as συνάφεια, which by his time has become a *terminus technicus* for the Antiochene milieu, especially Theodore of Mopsuestia.<sup>126</sup> Theodoret claims to be a follower of Theodore but here a variation is evident.<sup>127</sup>

122 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 5 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 20.): “Καὶ βλέπε τῆς ἁκρας συναφείας πῶς τίθησι τὰ γνωρίσματα.”

123 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 5 (ibid.): “Καὶ διὰ πάντων ἀπλῶς βεβαιούσης ἡμῖν τῆς θείας γραφῆς τὴν διάνοιαν, ἀχώριστον περὶ πατρός καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος κέκτησθε τὴν ἔννοιαν.”

124 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 7 (ibid., 23–24.): “Οὐ γὰρ ἄλλο τι τῆς συντάξεως ὁ λόγος παρίστησιν ἄλλ’ ἢ πατρός καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος τὸ τῆς οὐσίας ταυτὸν, καὶ μοι τὴν διαίρεσιν ἀναλαβὼν ὁ ἀντιλέγων δι’ ἀκριβείας σκοπεῖτω· εὐρήσει γὰρ ἐκεῖ τῆς οὐσίας τὸν λόγον ἐν τῇ τάξει τῆς συναφείας πληρούμενον.”

125 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 11 (ibid., 40.): “Οὕτως ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Κἂν ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ὑπάρχῃ, οὐ ταυτὸν ἂν εἴη τοῖς ἐξ ὧν ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ ἕτερον, ὥς εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς συναφείας ψυχῆς πρὸς σῶμα τρίτον ἀποτελούμενον ἄλλο.”

126 Cf., for example, *Hom. cat.* 5.7; *De incarn.* 11 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, ed. *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni: in epistolas B. Pauli commentarii; The Latin Version with the Greek Fragments*, 302.) and *Fragment In ep. ad Rom.* (PG 67, 601).

127 A more detailed discussion follows in chapter 3.5.

The term *συνάφεια* has become notorious for its connotation of “conjunction.” In that sense it functions as a rough equivalent of the Stoic *παράθεσις*, peripheral union of dry bodies.<sup>128</sup> This union would be best described as the physical proximity of two bodies. However, in the *Expositio rectae fidei* the word is used to describe the union of the persons of the Trinity. The three persons are explicitly said to share the one substance of Godhead. This union is said to be indissoluble. None of the attributes associated with *συνάφεια* in the *Expositio* is compatible with “peripheral union.” Theodoret’s use of the term is a novel interpretation. From the way he uses it in relation to the Trinity, one is forced to conclude that in his mind *συνάφεια* designated a full and indissoluble union of individual entities. Thus instead of “conjunction,” it seems that “unmixed union” would be a better translation of Theodoret’s concept of *συνάφεια*.

In conclusion, it is evident that there are many common points between the theologies of Theodoret and Theodore. However, I hope to have demonstrated in this section that finer points of both theological and terminological divergences are equally apparent.

Indubitably, Theodoret’s theology is indebted to Theodore. However, the question of to what extent he relied on it invites a monograph in its own right and thus must remain beyond the scope of this analysis.

As the discussion in this chapter endeavored to illustrate, Theodoret’s Christology has just as much in common with the theologies and lexicon of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa as with those of Theodore of Mopsuestia. It goes without saying that Theodoret knew their works, as is evident from his extensive florilegia (e.g., *Eranistes*), which he compiled later in life when the prevailing style of argumentation necessitated quotations from earlier authorities. Thus, a direct influence from the Cappadocians cannot

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128 According to the Stoics, there are four types of union between two or more bodies: *παράθεσις* (a peripheral union of bodies), *κράσις* (a union of bodies reserved for fluids, in which bodies penetrate every part of the other without being confounded into a newly created homogeneous mass (a *tertium quid*), *σύγχυσις* (a union of two objects where the distinctive attributes of each are destroyed so as to form a *tertium quid*) and *μίξις* (the same as *κράσις*, but reserved for dry bodies); see Stobaeus *Eclog.* 1, 368–378, esp. 374–6 (Joannes Stobaeus, “Ioannis Stobaei Anthologii libri duo priores qui inscribi solent Eclogae physicae et ethicae,” (Berolini: Apud Weidmannos, 1884), 152–55. esp. 152–53.); Alexander of Aphrodisias *De Mixtione* 142 A; cf. Zeller, *The Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*. 137–note 1; Luise Abramowski, *Drei christologische Untersuchungen*, ed. Herausgegeben von Eduard Lohse, vol. Beiheft 45, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der aelteren Kirche (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1981). 79–80.

be dismissed.<sup>129</sup> One thing remains indisputable: the theological lexicon of the *Expositio rectae fidei* is an appropriation of Cappadocian terminology in which substance (οὐσία) and nature (φύσις) are synonymous and signify the common underlying principle of a genus, the individuating characteristics are called ὑπόστασις (which signifies the features of an individual), and the term πρόσωπον is used to designate the realization of a particular substance.

### 3.6 The Mode of Union of the Logos and Humanity in Christ

#### 3.6.1 “Immutable”

Theodoret offers an explanation regarding the mode of union of the Logos with humanity in Christ. At the outset, he emphasizes the notion that the union was so close as to form one entity out of two natures. He stresses that “the Son is one, He who is set free and He who raised that which was set free.”<sup>130</sup>

Throughout the *Expositio*, he uses the word ἔνωσις to describe the union of natures in Christ. The word συνάφεια (conjunction) is not used in connection with Christology, although, as previously demonstrated, it would have been an appropriate term, because in his vocabulary συνάφεια did not have the connotation of a loose union, a mere conjunction. Theodoret uses it to describe the inseparable union of the persons in the Trinity.

In a couple of instances (at the end of chapter 9 and also at the end of chapter 10), Theodoret admits that the exact nature of the union is beyond the grasp of human intellect, but he is certain that in the union the properties of the natures must have been preserved. Thus, he says: “When you hear opposing sayings about the Son (i.e., the Incarnate Logos), distribute that which is said to each nature its own respectively; if there is something great and divine assign it to the divine nature, and if [there is] something small and human allocate it to the human nature.”<sup>131</sup>

129 It is true that Theodoret refers explicitly to Theodore of Mopsustia as his “teacher.” However, it has been proven that it is rather unlikely that Theodoret actually studied under Theodore, since the latter had been elected bishop and moved from Antioch to Mopsuestia just a couple of years after Theodoret’s birth. Cf. N. Bonwetsch, “Theodoret,” in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, ed. J.J. Herzog (Stuttgart und Hamburg: R. Besser, 1854–68), XIX. 610.; Opitz, “Theodore von Kyros,” v. col. 1792.; Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*,” 129, n. 14.

130 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 10 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 36.): “... εἰς οὖν ἔστιν ὁ υἱός, ὃ τε λυθείς ὃ τε τὸ λυθὲν ἀναστήσας.”

131 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 10 (ibid.): “ὅταν οὖν ἀκούσης περὶ ἐνὸς υἱοῦ τὰς ἐναντίας φωνάς, καταλήγων μέριξε ταῖς φύσεσιν τὰ λεγόμενα, ἂν μὲν τι μέγα καὶ θεῖον, τῇ θείᾳ φύσει προσένμων, ἂν δέ τι μικρὸν καὶ ἀνθρώπινον, τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ λογιζόμενος φύσει.”

As shown above, Theodoret uses several analogies in order to explain the union of natures in Christ: the union of body and soul, the building of a house out of different materials which when put together create a new entity, and the analogy of light and the Sun. The purpose of these analogies is to describe the closeness of the union of divinity and humanity in Christ. For the purposes of the present analysis, the analogy of body and soul, which is most frequently used in Christological debates, will be analyzed further.<sup>132</sup>

Theodoret accepted the analogy as fitting, but with some reservations. The analogy is acceptable inasmuch as it portrays humans as composite beings, i.e., human nature is created out of the union of two natures: the immaterial nature of the soul and the material nature of the body. However, for Theodoret, this is where the resemblance ends. In humans, when the natures of the soul and body come together, they lose their respective properties and a new nature—human nature—is created. In Theodoret's words: "The man, although two natures are discernable in him, is not [these] two natures, but from the two natures."<sup>133</sup> He further explains: "Although he (man) is created (lit. exists) out of soul and body, he is not identified with either of these, but is something else, since the unmixed union (συνάφεια) of the soul and body in man is such as to create something third."<sup>134</sup>

The creation of a new composite nature, however, cannot be associated with Christ. As previously mentioned, in Christ one finds a union of the perfect divinity (i.e., the Logos) and perfect humanity (which consists of body and a rational soul). According to Theodoret, this union is permanent and indivisible.<sup>135</sup> However, the outcome of the union cannot possibly be a creation of a different nature. While in humans the union of the natures of soul and body creates a composite human nature, in Christ the union of the divine and human natures does not create a *tertium quid* (some third nature, in which the natures that make up the union would lose their respective properties by

132 By way of excursus, it must be mentioned here that this analogy was popular among the theologians of the fourth century. Before Theodoret, it was used by a very diverse set of people, Athanasius of Alexandria, Apollinarius of Laodicea, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Augustine of Hippo among them.

133 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 11 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 40.): "ὁ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος, εἰ καὶ διττὰς ἐν ἑαυτῷ δείκνυσιν τὰς φύσεις, οὐ δύο φύσεις ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν δύο [φύσεων]."

134 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 11 (ibid.): "Κἂν ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ὑπάρχη, οὐ ταῦτόν ἂν εἴη τοῖς ἐξ ὧν ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἕτερον, ὥς εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς συναφείας ψυχῆς πρὸς σῶμα τρίτον ἀποτελούμενον ἄλλο."

135 Cf. Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 17 (ibid., 62.): "Οὕτως ἐν τῷ οἰκείῳ ναῷ ἀχώριστον λέγοντες καὶ οἶονεὶ τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος κατοικεῖν . . ."



commingling). In Christ, both natures retain their full properties. Theodoret affirms that Christ “is not made up of divinity and humanity as to create something different, but he is both God and man: God as perceived in his marvelous deeds, and Man revealed in the same passibility of the [human] nature.”<sup>136</sup>

In other words, after the union with humanity the Logos does not cease to be God (he remains omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, etc.), nor does the human nature of Christ lose its properties by being united to the divinity (we see that Christ still needs to eat, sleep, he cries, etc.). Yet the union produced a new individual entity—a person who subsists in two natures. For Theodoret it was important to emphasize that the union of the divine Logos with humanity was not a physical/natural union, since the divine nature, being perfect, cannot enter into a union on the level of nature (φύσις) or substance (οὐσία). (As discussed previously, for Theodoret these two terms are identical.) Theodoret understands union on the level of nature/essence (φύσις/οὐσία) to imply a change in the constituent natures/substances. Such a thing is incompatible with the divine nature, which is unchangeable by definition:

If the Logos changed the body into His own substance, we ask, how [exactly] was the body changed into the substance of the Logos? Was it changed by addition to his substance? Then the substance would have been previously incomplete, if it could take addition. On the other hand, nothing could have been borrowed from it either. Therefore, nothing could be changed.<sup>137</sup>

### 3.6.2 “Unmixed”

Theodoret argued that the physical union (union on the level of φύσις, i.e., nature) of the divine and human natures is impossible, for they belong to opposite orders of existence. He persistently argued that nothing can exist outside of the two categories, i.e., everything is either created or uncreated. Theodoret

136 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 11 (ibid., 42.): “ὁ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐκ θεότητος καὶ ἀνθρωπότητος ἀπετελέσθη Χριστὸς, ἄλλος ὢν παρὰ τὰ δύο, ἀλλὰ καὶ θεὸς καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἐκάτερα τυγχάνει, θεὸς μὲν νοούμενος τῇ τῶν τεραστίων ἐνεργείᾳ, ἄνθρωπος δὲ δεικνύμενος τῇ τῆς φύσεως ὁμοιοπαθείᾳ.”

137 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 15 (ibid., 56.): “εἰ δὲ ὁ λόγος διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ οὐσίαν μετέβαλεν τὸ σῶμα, πάλιν ἐρωτήσωμεν, πῶς εἰς τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ λόγου μετεβλήθη τὸ σῶμα. Ἄρα μεταβληθὲν εἰς τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ λόγου προσθήκην τῇ οὐσίᾳ παρέσχηκεν; Οὐκοῦν ἐλλιπὴς ἂν ἦν πρὸ τούτου, εἴ γε προσθήκην δεξαμένη. Ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν ἀπὸ τούτου προσέλαβεν. Οὐκοῦν τὸ μεταβληθὲν οὐδὲν ἂν εἴη.” Cf. Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 7 “Everything that changes in the human nature, evidently does not change in the divine nature.” (ibid., 24.): “πάν ὃ τῆς κτίσεως παρήλλαχται τῇ θείᾳ [φύσει] οὐ παρήλλαχται δηλονότι.”



is explicit: “we have made the differentiation between two [types of] existence: the created and uncreated natures . . . having this distinction, there is surely nothing in-between the created and uncreated natures.”<sup>138</sup> The same idea is repeated at the end of *Expositio* 15. Naturally, Theodoret concluded that only God belongs to the category of the uncreated, while everything else, by virtue of taking its existence from God, belongs to the created order. Now, a union on the level of nature (φύσις) necessitates two things: first, the natures which enter the union are imperfect, since the union takes place either by the addition or subtraction of a part of the natures which are being united; and second, the result of the union is a new nature. Neither of these can apply to the union of the divine Logos with the complete humanity in Christ, because in either case the divinity of the Logos would be jeopardized. As argued previously, addition or subtraction from the divine nature is a logical impossibility, since such an action is incongruous with a perfect nature. Susceptibility to any change would automatically render it imperfect. Furthermore, even if it were possible to surpass the chasm between the created and uncreated orders and if the Logos entered a union with humanity on the level of nature (φύσις), the resulting composite nature would necessitate a substantial change of both constituent natures. In other words, in the nature resulting from the union both constituent natures would lose their properties: the divine nature would cease to be divine, and the human would cease to be human.

Thus, Theodoret concludes that the union of the Logos and the human element in Christ, cannot take place on the level of nature (φύσις), but takes place on the level of personalized individual existence: “let no one distinguish after the union between the Son Divine Logos and the Son Man, but perceive each as one and the same [subject].”<sup>139</sup> In the same chapter he continues “one is the Son, Lord, Christ and the Only-begotten; two natures—the one beyond ours, the other ours [i.e., human nature].”<sup>140</sup>

Now that the tenets of the Christology of the *Expositio rectae fidei* have been laid out, it is evident that even at this early stage Theodoret’s Christology was rather advanced, despite the rudimentary vocabulary he used to articulate

138 “ἀνωθεν τοίνυν ἡμεῖν εἰς δύο τὰ ὄντα διήρητο, εἷς τε ἀκτιστον καὶ κτιστὴν φύσιν . . . οὕτω τῆς διαιρέσεως ἐχούσης, θεότητος καὶ κτίσεως μηδὲν εἶναι μέσον βεβαιούσης.”

139 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 12 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 48.): “οὐκ ἂν τις εἴποι μετὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν τὸν μὲν κεχωρισμένως υἱὸν τὸν θεῖον λόγον, τὸν δὲ πάλιν υἱὸν τὸν ἀνθρώπου, ἀλλ’ ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ἑκάτερα νοήσει.”

140 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 12 (ibid.): “εἷς μὲν υἱὸς καὶ κύριος καὶ Χριστὸς καὶ μονογενής, φύσεις δὲ δύο, ἡ μὲν ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς, ἡ δὲ ἡμετέρα.”

complex theological concepts. In many respects, his Christology as exhibited in this work anticipates the Christological standard set at Chalcedon, with its strong emphasis on the union of the natures without confusion (i.e., union of the divine Logos and humanity in which both constituent parts retain their respective attributes).

Evidently, at this stage Theodoret's Christological terminology is rather underdeveloped and cannot fully express the complexity of his theological thinking. It is puzzling that while Theodoret demonstrates an impressive grasp of a rich Trinitarian terminology, he applies it only partially to Christological concepts. As demonstrated above, in the Trinitarian section of the *Expositio*, Theodoret used all the keywords of fourth-century Trinitarian theology, particularly of the Cappadocian variety. Yet in the Christological section of the *Expositio* he applied only the pair οὐσία/φύσις, and mostly in connection to the Logos *qua* the divine element of Christ. Although, as evidenced above, the Christological equivalents of the Trinitarian concepts existed in Theodoret's teaching, there is virtually no reference to either ὑπόστασις or πρόσωπον in the Christological lexicon of the *Expositio*.

However, this shortcoming in no way undermines the integrity of Theodoret's Christological position, which remains consistent throughout his life. During the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies, Theodoret developed and updated his Christological lexical tools, and yet his Christological position remained essentially unchanged. It is also evident from the present analysis that the lexicon of Theodoret's *Expositio rectae fidei* points indubitably to a date of composition before the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy, in which the creative application of Trinitarian theological terminology proved to be a point of contention, as is evident from the *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas of Cyril of Alexandria*.

### 3.7 The Logos as theios sporos: The Christology of the *Expositio rectae fidei*

A major objection to the adequacy of Theodoret's Christology has been his insistence on the fullness of humanity of Christ. Grillmeier sums up well the traditional objection to Theodoret's Christology, characterizing it as "too symmetrical and not constructed clearly round the hypostasis of the Logos." According to Grillmeier, Theodoret's concept of the unity of divinity and humanity in one πρόσωπον of the Logos is inadequate inasmuch as it is insufficiently clear that there was only one ὑπόστασις of Christ, leaving room for the

possibility that “the Word and manhood . . . are united in such a way as to be almost equal.”<sup>141</sup>

However, here I argue that Theodoret’s doctrine of Incarnation invites a more charitable interpretation of his Christology. In his system the union of divinity and humanity is not symmetrical, nor could the two be equal in the union, since one of the most fundamental points of his thinking is the unbridgeable distinction between the two orders of existence—the created and uncreated orders—to which humanity and divinity respectively belong. My intention here is to show that Theodoret’s Christology was not symmetrical, inasmuch as it envisioned the Logos as the sole personal subject in Christ. I argue this using the preceding analysis of the *Expositio rectae fidei* in addition to Theodoret’s anthropological model evident in his *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 5.50–51 and *Question 48 on Exodus*.

### 3.7.1 *The Doctrine of Incarnation in the Expositio rectae fidei*

In the *Expositio rectae fidei* Theodoret presents the Logos as the subject of the Incarnation. According to Theodoret, the Incarnation of the Logos was necessary in order to repay the debt of Adam’s offense: “When the Logos became perceivable by His creatures, he had to accomplish restoration (new creation) and to give ransom for the offense which Adam had made.”<sup>142</sup> In the Incarnation, the Logos undergoes no change; he remains perfect, God: “while coming to us, He has not resigned the heavens.”<sup>143</sup>

Theodoret’s doctrine of Incarnation is defined by the effectiveness of its purpose, namely, it was constructed to explain efficiently the economy of salvation. For him, the Logos’s Incarnation was a necessity for the salvation of the human race. The whole purpose of the Incarnation was to repay the debt of the Protoplast in paradise. Adam had been created pure by God, so it was necessary that the ransom be paid by an equally perfect man. This is the reason why, for Theodoret, the fullness of Christ’s humanity was so important. Naturally, the one paying the ransom had to be created directly by

141 Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*. 493. The same objection is repeated in all major assessments of Theodoret’s Christology, e.g., McNamara, “Theodoret of Cyrus and the Unity of Person in Christ”; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*, and Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*. 330.

142 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 10: “Ὅτε τῶν οἰκείων πλασμαμάτων συνείδεν ὁ λόγος χρῆναι τὴν ἀνάπλασιν γενέσθαι καὶ τῆς τοῦ Ἀδὰμ τιμωρίας, ἣν παραβάς ὤφλησε, τὸ χρέος ἀποδοθῆναι. . .” (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 34.).

143 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 10: “. . . τῶν οὐρανῶν οὐκ ἀποστάς, πρὸς ἡμᾶς κατελήλυθεν. . .” (ibid.).

God as well. Thus, Theodoret insists that the Logos Himself created the human element in Christ. Since the Logos created the Protoplast who had transgressed, it was only fitting that the Logos Himself created again the one who effected the reparation.

Theodoret's account of the mechanism of Christ's Incarnation is rooted in the account of creation of Adam in Genesis (2:7): "... the Lord God fashioned (ἐπλασεν) man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his face the breath of life; and man became a living being."<sup>144</sup> Theodoret made a careful choice of language in the *Expositio* so as to leave no doubt about the connection. Adam was fashioned by God, and the perfect humanity of Christ was fashioned by God the Logos. In both cases the word for creation is πλάσις,<sup>145</sup> indicating the fashioning of an entity from existing matter. In the case of Adam the preexisting substance was "dust"; in the case of Christ, it was the nature of the Blessed Virgin. The parallel has an even deeper analogical level: the nature of the Blessed Virgin is connected to the dust out of which Adam was fashioned, for she shared in Adam's (human) nature. So, the concept of the reparation of the Protoplast's failure is central to Theodoret's understanding of the dynamics of Christ's Incarnation. Thus, Theodoret holds that just as Adam was not created *ex nihilo*, but fashioned by God, so also the human element in Christ was fashioned from the human mother and not *ex nihilo*.

The parallel between Adam and Christ reflects a soteriological concern which Theodoret shared with his master Theodore of Mopsuestia. Theodore's understanding of the economy of salvation was based on the notion that the reversal of Adam's failure necessitates the moral victory of another perfect man.<sup>146</sup> Just as Adam was free of sin, and then fell morally, the repair must be accomplished by a human being equally free from sin, who would cancel Adam's failure through a moral victory.

Theodoret's language masterfully reinforces the parallel. The creation of the humanity of Christ is referred to as πλάσις (fashioning, molding):

Through the Virgin, whose origin is in the Davidic race according to the promise given to him, due to the necessity of the *economy*, having entered her womb as a kind of divine seed (καὶ ταύτης τὴν νηδὺν εἰσδύς οἰονεῖ τις

144 "καὶ ἐπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν."

145 Geoffrey W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961). 1089.; Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon (revised supplement)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). 1412.

146 Cf. Frederick G. McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, The Early Church Fathers. (London and New York: Routledge, 2009). 58ff.

θεῖος σπόρος), he creates a temple for himself (πλάττει ναὸν ἑαυτῷ), the perfect human being (τὸν τέλειον ἄνθρωπον); having taken some part of her nature, he invested with existence the fashioning of the temple (τοῦ ναοῦ διάπλασιν οὐσιώσας).<sup>147</sup>

The creation of this human temple of God is the “new creation” or “renovation” (ἀνάπλασις) which Theodoret emphasized at the beginning of his Christological discourse in chapter 10 of the *Expositio*. The reference to Christ’s humanity as the “temple of the Logos” is standard code in the Antiochene milieu for Christ’s humanity. Theodoret’s choice of words, which describe the process of creation of the human component of Christ, is further indicative of his understanding of the mechanism of the Incarnation—the Logos creating and appropriating the human element of Christ—, which is ultimately explicable only in view of Theodoret’s anthropology.

### 3.7.2 *The Anthropological Model in the Expositio rectae fidei*

Theodoret’s anthropological model is distinctly different from that of Plato, whose doctrine of the preexistence of souls effectively disqualified him from the start as a likely important influence. However, it is a different case with Plato’s “disciple” Aristotle and later Iamblichus. While there are marked differences between the two anthropological models, there are also many common points, and they, together with Theodoret’s choice of terms, suggest that to a certain extent he was indebted to their anthropological models.

Theodoret used the term οὐσιώω (to invest with existence) to explain the creation of the human element of Christ. This term is singularly important,

<sup>147</sup> Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 10: Μέση δὲ παρθένω, ἐκ Δαυϊτικοῦ καταγομένη γένους διὰ τὰς πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπαγγελίας, πρὸς τὴν τῆς οἰκονομίας χρεῖαν χρησάμενος, καὶ ταύτης τὴν νηδὺν εἰσθὺς οἰονεῖ τις θεῖος σπόρος, πλάττει ναὸν ἑαυτῷ, τὸν τέλειον ἄνθρωπον, μέρος τι λαβὼν τῆς ἐκείνης φύσεως καὶ εἰς τὴν τοῦ ναοῦ διάπλασιν οὐσιώσας (Otto, ed. *Iustini philosophi et martyris opera quae feruntur omnia*, 34.).

By way of an excursus, it is interesting to note here that the same concept is paraphrased by Pamphilus of Jerusalem a century later in his *Panoplia Dogmatica* 7.3 (p. 625): ὁ θεὸς λόγος . . . ἐνυπόστατόν τι μέρος λαβὼν τῆς ἐκείνης φύσεως καὶ εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν ὑπόστασιν οὐσιώσας. However, as B. Puderon has shown, the concept is present in the Christian literature at least since the second century (Justin, *Dial.* 113.4.); Bernard Pouderon, “L’influence d’Aristote dans la doctrine de la procreation des premiers Pères et ses implications théologiques” in Luc Brisson, Marie-Hélène Congourdeaneau, Jean-Luc Solère (eds.), *L’embryon: Formation et animation, Antiquité grecque et latine tradition hébraïque, chrétienne et islamique* (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 2008), 161.

because it sheds light on Theodoret's concept of the Incarnation in terms of the indwelling of humanity by the Logos. The term οὐσιώω has the connotation of human development on the embryonic level. For example, when describing the physics of human conception and prenatal development, in the *De generatione animalium*, Aristotle used this term to describe the investiture of the embryo with life.<sup>148</sup> Besides Aristotle, no other ancient writer predating Theodoret used the term in relation to human prenatal development.<sup>149</sup>

However, this is not the only connection between Aristotle's and Theodoret's anthropology. For Aristotle, there were three elements that comprise the human soul: nutritive (θρεπτική), sentient (αἰσθητική), and rational (λογική). The nutrient and sentient elements cannot exist apart from body and are created together with the embryo at the moment of conception.<sup>150</sup> The rational element is communicated only at a later stage. It is a part of the soul that is self-subsistent and can exist independently of the body.<sup>151</sup>

For Aristotle, lower types of living beings have nutrient and sentient souls as their animating principles, but humans are set apart by the rational soul. The exact origin of this element is not clearly defined, but it is said to be from "outside" and of "divine origin":

It is plain that the semen and the unfertilized embryo, while still separate from each other, must be assumed to have the nutritive soul potentially, but not actually, except that (like those unfertilized embryos that are separated from the mother) it absorbs nourishment and performs the function of the nutritive soul. For at first all such embryos seem to live the life of a plant . . . It remains then that the mind alone is introduced from outside and that it is solely divine.<sup>152</sup>

148 Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* iv.7 (Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle*, ed. J.A. Smith, W.D. Ross, and A. Platt, vol. 5 [Oxford, 1912], 776a33).

149 This observation is based on an online TLG search for the term οὐσιώω.

150 Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* ii.3 (Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle*, 736b).

151 Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* ii.3 (Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle*, 736a–b; see also *De anima* i and iii 4 (*De anima*, ed. J.A. Smith and W.D. Ross, trans. Arthur Platt, vol. 3, *The Works of Aristotle* (Oxford, 1931), 408b18–24) W. Bröcker argued that an independent νοῦς was a logical necessity of Aristotle's philosophy and theology in order to explain the special place he reserves for the νοῦς as opposed to διανοεῖσθαι (Walter Bröcker, *Aristoteles* (Frankfurt am Main, 1964), 280–9).

152 Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* ii.3 (Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle*, 736b7–13.): λείπεται δὴ τὸν νοῦν μόνον θύραθεν ἐπειστένειν καὶ θεῖον μόνον (ET in Paul Crego, 'Theodoret of Kyros on the Relationship of the Body and the Soul Before Birth', *The Greek Orthodox*

As Moraux has argued convincingly, this reference to the rational soul being from outside ought not be understood as some sort of external intervention in the development of the embryo.<sup>153</sup> Aristotle believed that all the parts of the soul are present in the embryo potentially. Every faculty of the soul is present in the vital heat of the male seed and cannot exist independently of the body.<sup>154</sup> Thus, Aristotle held that the human embryos were formed from the male seed and that the animating principle was transferred with it from the father to the embryo. However, the embryo could be properly called human only after it was apportioned reason (νοῦς), which according to him took place at a later time in human gestation:<sup>155</sup>

Plainly those principles whose activity is bodily cannot exist without a body, e.g., walking cannot exist without feet. For the same reason also they cannot enter from outside. For neither is it possible for them to enter by themselves, being inseparable from body, nor yet in a body, for the semen is only a secretion of the nutriment in process of change. It remains, then, for the reason alone so to enter and alone to be divine, for no bodily activity has any connection with the activity of reason.<sup>156</sup>

Interestingly, similar teachings are found in many subsequent philosophers in the Platonist traditions, of which Iamblichus is especially relevant for this discussion. Commenting on Porphyry's *To Gaurus on How Embryos are Ensouled* 2.2.10, he misinterpreted the reference to Hippocrates as if the latter held that the human embryos were ensouled after they were fully formed.<sup>157</sup> Porphyry

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*Theological Review* 41 [1996]: 19–37, translation on p. 22: 'It remains then that the mind alone is introduced from outside and that it is solely divine').

- 153 Paul Moraux, 'À propos νοῦς θύραθεν du chez Aristote', in A. Mansion (ed.), *Autour d'Aristote recueil d'études de philosophie ancienne et médiévale offert à Monseigneur A. Mansion* (Louvain, 1955), 255–95; see Friedrich Solmsen, 'The Vital Heat, the Inborn Pneuma and the Aether', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77 (1957), 119–23; Joseph Needham, *A History of Embryology* (Cambridge, 21959), 49.
- 154 Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* 11.3 (Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle*, 736b29–737a7). William W. Fortenbaugh, 'Recent Scholarship on the Psychology of Aristotle', *The Classical World* 60 (1967), 316–27, esp. 325.
- 155 For Aristotle, the rational aspect of the soul is not present at the moment of conception of humans (*De generatione animalium* 11.5 (Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle*, 741a9–15), while it seems to be present at birth (*De Anima*. 417b16–18).
- 156 Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* 11.3 (Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle*, 736b22–29).
- 157 Iamblichus, *De anima: Text, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. J. Mansfeld, D.T. Runia, and J.C.M. Van Winden, trans. John F. Finamore and John M. Dillon, *Philosophia antiqua*,



does acknowledge the existence of theories of ensoulment of embryos after their formation, yet it is unlikely that he had in mind Hippocrates in connection with this teaching. As J. Wilberding has argued, Porphyry's passage refers to Hippocrates only in support of the dating of the full development of the embryo—thirty days for male and forty-two days for female embryos.<sup>158</sup>

It is more likely that Porphyry was referring here to the Peripatetic tradition, which had influenced Middle Platonist philosophers such as Galen and Alcinous and was subsequently appropriated by philosophers in the Platonic traditions.<sup>159</sup> Galen likewise held that the embryo becomes an animal (a living being) only after the full formation of the human body (*De semine* 94, 8–11).<sup>160</sup> As Needham has rightly noted, whereas Galen's general acumen in biology is admirable, he cannot be relied upon for original insights into embryology.<sup>161</sup> In Galen's time that aspect of anthropology was dominated by the Peripatetics, as Lucian of Samosata (Galen's contemporary) suggests in *Βίων πράσις*.<sup>162</sup>

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Vol. 42 (Atlanta, GA: Society for Biblical Literature, 2002). 59; Porphyry, *To Gaurus on how embryos are ensouled*, ed. R. Sorabji, trans. James Wilberding, Ancient Commentators on Aristotle (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011). 32.

- 158 Porphyry, *To Gaurus on how embryos are ensouled*. 58, n. 18. Before Porphyry, this idea is present in another Platonic philosopher—Plotinus (cf. Fragment 105 in Plutarch, *Moralia: Fragments* xv, trans. F.H. Sandbach, Loeb Classical Library, No. 429 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969). 217): '... the articulation of female embryos is slower than that of male, because the quantity of moisture in them is not easily mastered by the formative power contained in the heat. So there is a scientific explanation for the statement that the sixteenth day is excellent for getting males, but unsuitable for females.'
- 159 R.M. Jones convincingly argues that Aristotle's psychology influenced Plutarch. Whether this influence was direct or derived from intermediary sources is uncertain. However, it is certain that Plutarch did have considerable knowledge of Aristotle, since he reportedly wrote eight books on *Topics* of Aristotle and a book on the *Categories*. Cf. Lamprias, *De scriptis Plutarchi Chaeronensis. Et Graece et Latine nun primum editus* (excudebat Joanne Praetorius, 1597); Roger Miller Jones, *The Platonism of Plutarch, and Selected Papers* (New York: Garland Publ., 1980).
- 160 Cf. Galen, *On Semen*, trans. P. De Lacy (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1992).
- 161 Joseph Needham, *A History of Embryology*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959). 69–70.
- 162 The Peripatetics were said to be able to 'tell you of other information demanding far keener vision, about sperm and conception and the shaping of the embryo in the womb ...' Lucian of Samosata, *Philosophies for Sale* (*Βίων πράσις*) 26 (Lucian of Samosata, *Lucian with an English Translation*, ed. A.M. Harmon, vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (London and New York: William Heinemann and G.P. Puttnam's Sons, 1929). 505–06): '... ἀκούσεις ἄλλα πολλῶ τούτων ὀξυδερκέστερα, γονῆς τε πέρι καὶ γενέσεως καὶ τῆς ἐν ταῖς μήτραις τῶν ἐμβρύων πλαστικῆς ...'



Alcinous, however, is more helpful on this matter. He taught that souls “enter into bodies, following upon the natural processes which form the embryo.”<sup>163</sup> Although certain scholars would argue that this passage ought to be understood as a reference to the ensoulment at the moment of birth,<sup>164</sup> Wilberding has argued that the text itself does not support such a reading.<sup>165</sup> Moreover, Wilberding is correct in pointing out that Peripatetic teaching about the full ensoulment of the embryo at a later stage of its development was not uncommon in Late Antique thought. It is detectable in the Platonic tradition as early as Plutarch (cf. Fragment 105), and remained present in the philosophical traditions throughout the fourth century. A reference to this teaching is also present in Iamblichus’s *De anima* 31, where he ascribes it to Hippocrates: “According to Hippocrates the Asclepiad, life is actually created and the soul becomes present when the sperm receives form (πλασθῆ) (for it is then suitably disposed to share in life). . . .”<sup>166</sup>

This fact is singularly important for a more complete understanding of the anthropological model of Theodoret of Cyrrhus, because during his formative years in a monastery near Apamea he was likely to have come into contact with Platonic philosophers of the Iamblichan variety.<sup>167</sup> At the beginning of

163 Porphyry, *To Gaurus on how embryos are ensouled*, ed. R. Sorabji, trans. James Wilberding, Ancient Commentators on Aristotle (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011). 59, n. 18.

164 Alcinous, *The Handbook of Platonism*, trans. John Dillon, Clarendon Later Ancient Philosophers (Oxford: The University of Oxford Press, 1993). 156.; Tertullian, *Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani De Anima*, ed. Jan H. Waszink, vol. 100, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae (Leiden: Brill, 2010). 322.

165 Porphyry, *To Gaurus on how embryos are ensouled*. 59, n. 18.

166 ‘Κατὰ δ’ Ἱπποκράτην, τὸν τῶν Ἀσκληπιαδῶν, ὅταν πλασθῇ τὸ σπέρμα (τότε γὰρ ἐπιτηδείως ἔχειν αὐτὸ μεταλαμβάνειν ζωῆς) . . . πρῶτως ἢ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν ζωοποιῶ καὶ παρουσία τῆς ψυχῆς φύεται.’ The present translation is based on the Finamore/Dillon translation. However, it is edited to reflect more faithfully the critical text of Iamblichus, *De anima: Text, Translation, and Commentary*. 58–59.

167 It has been argued that Theodoret’s anthropological model was indebted to that of Julian the Arian. In the *Commentary on Job*, Julian displays a similar anthropological model stating that the soul is created after the formation of the body: μετὰ τὸ πλασθῆναι τὸ ἔμβρυον καὶ ἐξεικονισθῆναι λαμβάνει τὴν ψυχὴν παρὰ θεοῦ (‘Ayant donc montré la construction (de l’animal), il signifie aussi l’insufflation, montrant comment c’est après que l’embryon a été façonné et configuré qu’il reçoit l’âme de la part de Dieu’); Julien L’Arien, “Commentaire sur Job” in Dieter Hagedorn (ed.) *Der Hiobkommentar des Arianers Julian* (Patristische Texte und Studien 14. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973). 80. M. Cougourdeau argued that Theodoret followed Julian in asserting that the embryo was endowed with soul after it was fully formed, based on Gen 2:7 and Exodus 21:22–23; see Marie-Hélène Cougourdeau, *L’Embryon et son âme dans les sources grecques (vie siècle av. J.-C. - Ve siècle apr. J.-C.)* (Paris:

the fourth century, Iamblichus had established a school in Apamea and had developed a curriculum for the study of both Plato and Aristotle. The school quickly attracted an impressive number of followers. It was characterized by the emphasis it placed on theurgic acts and it closely resembled a religious cult.<sup>168</sup> As a young monk in a monastery near Apamea, full of energy and fervor for Christian apologetics, Theodoret must have entered into dialogue with the followers of Iamblichus. One might not be too far wide of the mark to say that Theodoret's *Graecarum affectionum curatio*, an early work against paganism, might have been a product of this interaction. It comes as no surprise, then, that via Platonist schools a Peripatetic anthropological model finds its way into Theodoret's thought (cf. *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 5.50–51).

Theodoret's anthropology does not acknowledge conception as the beginning of human life. The developing fetus, while having the ability to grow and develop, is fully animated only at a later stage of its development. In his *Questions on the Octateuch*, Theodoret is explicit that the human fetus is fully animated only after its formation. In the *Questions on Exodus* 48, he says: "It is the general opinion that life is communicated to the fetus when its body is fully formed in the womb. Thus, right after forming Adam's body, the Creator breathed life into him."<sup>169</sup> A similar notion is repeated in his *Graecarum affectionum curatio*:

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Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2007). 300 and 304. However, there is no evidence that Theodoret was familiar with the work of Julian the Arian. Moreover, Theodoret's adoption of an Arian anthropological model would not have escaped the attention of such an astute theologian as Cyril of Alexandria, who would have used such an 'imprudence' to discredit his opponent. Finally, there is no need to look for the origin of Theodoret's anthropology in Julian's works. Theodoret is forthright in claiming that his anthropology is part of the general culture of his time (see *Question on Exodus* 48 in Theodoret of Cyrus, (*On Genesis and Exodus*), ed. J.F. Petruccione, trans. R.C. Hill, vol. 1, The Library of Early Christianity (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007). 300–01).

168 See *On the Mysteries*, trans. Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell, Writings from the Greco Roman World, Vol. 4 (Atlanta, GA: Society for Biblical Literature, 2003). xxiii–xxvi.

169 Question on Exodus 48: "Φασί, τοῦ σώματος ἐν τῇ μήτρᾳ τελείου διαπλασθέντος, τότε ψυχούσθαι τὸ ἔμβρυον· καὶ γὰρ τοῦ Ἀδάμ τὸ σῶμα πρότερον ὁ ποιητὴς διαπλάσας, οὕτως ἐνεφύσησε τὴν ψυχὴν." (Theodoret of Cyrus, *The Questions on the Octateuch (On Genesis and Exodus)*, ed. J.F. Petruccione, trans. R.C. Hill, vol. 1, The Library of Early Christianity (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007). 300–01.).

... the body was fashioned from earth and water and the other elements; the soul, on the other hand, as though existing beforehand, was not sent down into it, but it was made after the body's construction. For it says: 'God fashioned the human being from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the human became a living soul.'<sup>170</sup>

Theodoret's understanding is that a part of human nature preexists the beginning of human life.<sup>171</sup> He found evidence for this in the chronological sequence of the creation of man in Genesis 2:7. As P. Crego rightly noted, Theodoret believed that the account in Genesis suggests that the soul is created at a certain point in the physical development of the human embryo.<sup>172</sup> Both body and soul were created by God, which implied that both were created as good. Yet the soul must not be understood as a portion of divinity; the soul has its own nature, which is that of a created intelligible and rational spirit.<sup>173</sup> The same teaching is repeated in the *Questions on Genesis* 23.<sup>174</sup> Therefore, Theodoret's

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- 170 Theodoret, *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 5.50–51 (Théodoret de Cyr, *Thérapeutique des maladies helléniques*, trans. Pierre Canivet, 2 vols., Sources chrétiennes, Vol. 57 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1958). 243.): "... ἀπὸ γῆς μὲν καὶ ὕδατος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων στοιχείων διαπλασθῆναι τὸ σῶμα, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν οὐ προϋπάρχουσαν εἰς τοῦτο καταπεμφθῆναι, ἀλλὰ μετὰ τὴν τούτου δημιουργηθῆναι διάπλασιν· 'Ἐπλάσε' γάρ φησιν 'ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς· καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.'" For a variant of ET see Paul Crego, "Theodoret of Kyros on the Relationship of the Body and the Soul Before Birth," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 41, no. 1 (1996): 31.
- 171 A similar idea can be found in Origen (*Prin.* 1.7.4, 3.3.5, and 3.4.2), who, based on Luke 1:41 (the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth), argued that the human life begins in the womb. Origen interpreted the Biblical passage by asserting that God would not fill John the Baptist with Holy Spirit in his mother's womb nor would he 'leap' in the womb, if he had no soul. However, Origen's theory does not account for the moment of presence of human soul during the process of human gestation. Theodoret's anthropological model goes well beyond Origen's statement in as much as it offers an opinion as to when exactly the baby receives soul in womb.
- 172 Crego, "Theodoret of Kyros on the Relationship of the Body and the Soul Before Birth," 31.
- 173 Theodoret, *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 5.51 (Théodoret de Cyr, *Thérapeutique des maladies helléniques*. 243.): "... τὴν φύσιν αὐτῆς τῆς ψυχῆς, ὅτι πνεῦμά ἐστι νοητόν τε καὶ λογικόν." Cf. Crego, "Theodoret of Kyros on the Relationship of the Body and the Soul Before Birth," 32.
- 174 Theodoret, *Questions on the Octateuch* 23 (Theodoret of Cyrus, *The Questions on the Octateuch (On Genesis and Exodus)*. 58.): "Πρὸς δὲ τούτῳ, καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τὴν φύσιν ἀνίττεται, ὅτι πνεῦμα ἐστὶ κτιστόν, ὁράτον τε καὶ νοερόν, τῆς τῶν σωμάτων ἀπηλλαγμένον παχύτης."

understanding was that the fetus, at the beginning, does not constitute a person, for the soul is absent.

It is evident that Theodoret's theory draws upon some elements of Aristotle's anthropology.<sup>175</sup> However, Theodoret's anthropology is entirely Christianized: his argument is rooted in Scripture rather than prior philosophical discourse. Moreover, while he emphatically negates the possibility that the human soul (for Theodoret every soul is endowed with reason, which is its inseparable part) is introduced from "outside" (θύραθεν), he does not share the Aristotelian understanding of the "divine origin" of the soul: "the soul is not being introduced from the outside, and not implanted by the act of generation, but by divine decree, it receives its birth according to the law which was placed from the beginning in nature."<sup>176</sup> For Theodoret, the soul is created by God and thus could not be a portion of God. While his choice of words may indicate a modification of Aristotle's theory, it is quite possible that he misunderstood Aristotle, whose characterization of the soul as being from "outside" and of "divine origin" could have referred to the origin of human souls, in general terms, as extraordinary and supernatural divine creations, but not in the sense of divine implants. Be it as it may, it is evident that Theodoret developed his understanding of human nature in dialogue with Aristotle's anthropology.

Theodoret's teaching here, however, appears to be a clear departure from the Cappadocian tradition. Gregory of Nyssa in *De hominis opificio* 29 argues against the notion that the body preexists the soul or vice versa on the grounds that that would entail the superiority of one over the other: "so it is not true to say either that the soul exists before the body, or that the body exists without the soul, but that there is one beginning in both."<sup>177</sup> Gregory's concern was to exclude any possibility that the body could be understood to be more

175 It ought to be noted here that B. Pouderon, in his article on the embryology among Christian authors until the fourth century, also noted that although the Christian fathers were generally suspicious of Aristotle's doctrine of human procreation, he finds that the Aristotelian model is evident at least until Nemesius of Emesa. See: B. Pouderon, "L'influence d'Aristote dans la doctrine de la procreation," 165.

176 Theodoret, *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 5.52–3 (Théodoret de Cyr, *Thérapeutique des maladies helléniques*. 243.): "οὐ θύραθεν ποθεν τῆς ψυχῆς εἰσκρινομένης, οὐδέ γε τῆς γονῆς φουμένης, ἀλλὰ τῷ θεῷ ὅρω κατὰ τὸν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐντεθέντα ἐν τῇ φύσει νόμον δεχομένης τὴν γένεσιν." (ET in Crego, "Theodoret of Kyros on the Relationship of the Body and the Soul Before Birth," 33.).

177 Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio* 29.3 (PG 44, 236B): "Ὡς μήτε ψυχὴν πρὸ τοῦ σώματος, μήτε χωρὶς ψυχῆς τὸ σῶμα ἀληθὲς εἶναι λέγειν, ἀλλὰ μίαν ἀμφοτέρων ἀρχὴν..." (ET in NPNF<sup>2</sup> 5, 421). Cf. Crego, "Theodoret of Kyros on the Relationship of the Body and the Soul Before Birth," 26.

important than the soul due to chronological precedence in creation. He believed that without a soul the embryo would be dead and unable to grow and develop.<sup>178</sup> The embryo is said to be able to develop independently, without any external interference.<sup>179</sup> Nemesisius of Emesa shared Gregory's view that the soul is the source of life for bodies. According to him, the soul is the forming power of bodies.<sup>180</sup>

Theodoret of Cyrrhus did not share this view. For him, the human soul did not exist from the moment of conception but was introduced to the body. As indicated in the above-mentioned passages from *Questions on Exodus* 48 and *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 5.50–51, he believed that an embryo was alive; it was able to grow but was soulless, until it developed human features, at which point it was ensouled and became a full human being [person].

### 3.7.3 *Theodoret's Anthropology and the Doctrine of Incarnation*

His doctrine of indwelling (i.e., Incarnation) is motivated by his anthropology: the divine Logos, as the seed (i.e., the creating principle) enters into the womb of the Virgin Mary and creates humanity for Himself. In the union of the divine and human natures of Christ, the Logos is the subject and the governing principle of the Incarnation. Thus for Theodoret, the Logos firstly appropriated an impersonal part of Christ's humanity—the developing fetus, which at a later stage was supplemented with the reason-endowed soul. This model of Incarnation had several benefits. While safeguarding the full humanity of

178 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio* 29.5 (PG 44, 237A): “εἰ δὲ τις καὶ ἐναργέστερον ζητοῖ τεκμήριον τοῦ ζῆν ἐκεῖνο τὸ μέρος ὅπερ ἀρχὴ τοῦ κατασκευαζομένου γίνεται ζῶου, δυνατόν ἐστι καὶ δι’ ἄλλων σημείων, δι’ ὧν τὸ ἔμψυχον ἐκ τοῦ νεκροῦ διακρίνεται, καὶ περὶ τούτου κατανοῆσαι. Τεκμήριον γὰρ τοῦ ζῆν ἐπὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ποιοῦμεθα, τὸ θερμὸν εἶναι τινα καὶ ἐνεργὸν καὶ κινούμενον.”

179 Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio* 29.4 (PG 44, 236C): “... καὶ ὥσπερ οὐκ ἂν τις ἀμφιβάλοι πρὸς τὰς τῶν ἄρθρων τε καὶ σπλάγχνων διαφορὰς ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἐντεθὲν σχηματίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἄλλης τινὸς δυνάμεως ἐπείσερχομένης, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐγκειμένης φυσικῶς πρὸς τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτῆς μεθισταμένης.”

180 Nemesisius of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man* 2. 28. 1–3 and 2. 29. 6–9 (Nemesisius of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man*, trans. R.W. Sharples and P.J. Van der Eijk, Translated Texts for Historians, Vol. 49 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008). 66–67.): “... it is evident that nothing can have [only] the capacity of being alive, but everything has it actively. Primarily, what gives the soul its form is nothing other than life: for life is present to soul naturally, but to body by [its] participation [in soul]...” and “... if the soul is moved incidentally, but the body of itself, the body will move of itself even if the soul does not exist; but, if that is so, there will be a living being even without a soul. All this is absurd...”

Christ, Theodoret was still able to explain the mode of unity of the Logos with the humanity, although the two belonged to altogether different orders of existence, which fact effectively precluded the possibility of a union on the level of substance or nature (οὐσία or φύσις).<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, this model guaranteed the preeminence of the Logos in the union, since it was the Logos who had created and appropriated not a fully formed man, as a person, but all the parts of Christ's humanity. The union, therefore, transpires before humanity was fully developed into a complete person.

Consequently, there is no symmetry in the union. The Logos is the only person present at the moment when the union is contracted and, therefore, he is the subject of Incarnation. This model anticipates Chalcedon, since it secures the notion that humanity properly belongs to the Logos (against Nestorianism), while at the same time upholding the notion that Christ had a reason-endowed human soul (against Apollinarianism).

This is why Theodoret, at first sight, may appear inconsistent in acknowledging diametrically opposed theological teachings: he effortlessly accepted the title "Theotokos" (θεοτόκος—Birth-giver of God) for the Virgin Mary as early as AD 430, while mere weeks later he refuted the famed *Twelve Anathemas* of

181 M. Vinzent detected a similar argument in Ps. Athanasius's c. Ar. IV 21f. (68,6–13; 69,7–12 S.), where the problem of the double *homoousios* in Jesus Christ is discussed. It is interesting to note that Ps. Athanasius argues that in the union the two components (viz. the divine Logos and the humanity) remain distinct so that the result cannot be said to be consubstantial with neither divinity nor humanity *only*, but with both. However, the Logos retains precedence in the union. In this idea Vinzent detected Neo-Platonic echoes inasmuch as the substance that engenders remains preeminent in relation to the substance which is engendered; see M. Vinzent, *Pseudo-Athanasius, Contra Arianos IV: Eine Schrift gegen Asterius von Kappadokien, Eusebius von Cäsarea, Markell von Ankyra und Photin von Sirmium* (London, New York, Köln: E.J. Brill, 1996). 352–53. This observation was based on Galen's *Ad Gaurum* 6.2 and 14.3 ('[according to Plato] . . . the things that have been engendered from the substance of some things are always a step down from the things that had engendered them in terms of power and substance; and it is impossible for them to be of the same substance as the things that engendered them, yet they do in a way become obedient to those that brought them forth and are perfected by them,' and '... the ignorant views of the Stoics . . . have turned things upside-down and dared to generate the better from the worse . . . While they generate everything from the bottom up through different kinds of and accumulations of motions, one ought to proceed from the top down and advance from the better to the lesser, because every generation is by its own substance naturally disposed to generate something worse than itself and not something better.');

Porphyry, *To Gaurus on how embryos are ensouled*, 39 and 50.

Cyril of Alexandria which were directed against Nestorius's rejection of it; he could author the *Tome of Reunion* (AD 433) yet still quote the writings of Cyril of Alexandria in support of his teachings, while claiming in good faith that he had never departed from his original Christological position.<sup>182</sup>

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182 Cf. Theodoret, Letter 113 (to Leo of Rome) in SC 111, 64 and NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 294; Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 96–147. 64.

## Theodoret's Christology at the Dawn of the Nestorian Controversy: *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas of Cyril of Alexandria*

Theodoret's *Expositio rectae fidei* predates the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy which marks the beginning of the Christological debates of the fifth century. However, as mentioned previously, Lequien and Sellers have planted a seed of doubt in the scholarly dating of the *Expositio*. Some scholars, while generally dating the work before the controversy with Cyril of Alexandria, still seem hesitant to pronounce a final verdict on the issue.<sup>1</sup> Thus in order to reconstruct Theodoret's early Christology fully, it seems necessary that another of Theodoret's early works be examined, one which can be dated precisely and which contains substantial Christological material. Theodoret's *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas of Cyril of Alexandria* fits these criteria singularly well, and the following analysis of its Christology will yield sufficient material to reconstruct definitively its author's Christological teaching in the period pre-dating the Christological controversies of the fifth century.

### 4.1 The *Twelve Anathemas* of Cyril of Alexandria

In late November 430, Cyril of Alexandria pronounced anathema upon everyone who did not recognize his Christological model as presented in twelve Christological statements appended to a letter to Nestorius of Constantinople. As previously mentioned, the letter quickly reached John of Antioch, who then started to take the controversy between Cyril and Nestorius more seriously and asked two renowned theologians from his patriarchate, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Andrew of Samosata, to provide an analysis and response.<sup>2</sup> Theodoret

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1 For instance, in the most recent scholarly appraisal of the dating, F. Young says that all internal features of the work indicate that the *Expositio* was indeed an early work, but she still hints at reservations when, later on in the text, she says: "But if this is an early work then it is extremely significant. . . ." Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*, 332.

2 Andrew of Samosata's refutation of Cyril's *Twelve Anathemas* is characterized by ever more moderate language, though it is tainted by the author's surprising inability to grasp the



responded to the request in a letter to the archbishop (Ep. 150), to which he appended twelve Christological counter-statements.<sup>3</sup>

After the receipt of the *Twelve Anathemas*, the initial controversy between Cyril and Nestorius quickly escalated to a universal battle between two Christological schools of thought, each of which accused the other of heresy. This comes as no surprise, since the method of argumentation in ecclesiastical circles of Late Antiquity almost always involved accusations of heresy.<sup>4</sup> The charge of heresy was a very efficient way of discrediting the opponent.<sup>5</sup> Something that would begin innocently as a personal dispute between two ecclesiastical personages would often rapidly acquire a theological dimension. Naturally, the statements made were scrutinized by the opposing parties. The doctrinal implications of the statements, which were often products of the opponent's imagination bolstered by a lack of charity, were given as much credibility as the actual statements. Moreover, the opponent would often be accused of reviving a notorious heresy that had been condemned long before. As McGuckin observed, "in theological argumentation precedents were always sought from the nearest parallel in history much as legal argument today looks to precedent for authority."<sup>6</sup> In this atmosphere, it is no surprise that Cyril chose the charged language of anathemas for his exchange with Nestorius.

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subtlety of his opponent's theological thought. For further discussion see: Joseph Mahé, "Évêques orientaux du patriarcat d'Antioche," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 7 (1906): 506–07. Cf. Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 38.; Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*. 238–39.; Richard, "Notes sur l'évolution doctrinale de Théodoret," 463.; Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 17.

3 For the text of the epistle: PG 76, 385–452; ACO I, 1, 6, 107–48; ACO I, 1, 7, 33ff.; NPNF<sup>2</sup> 3, 26–31. For historical context see Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Collections conciliaires*. 32.; see also Richard, "Notes sur l'évolution doctrinale de Théodoret," 463.

4 Thomas Graumann, *Die Kirche Väter: Vätertheologie und Väterbeweis in den Kirchen des Ostens bis zum Konzil von Ephesus (431)*, ed. J. Wallman, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 118 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002). 310.

5 Early evidence for this practice is found in Irenaeus of Lyons's treatment of the early heresies, where he associates them with Simon Magus, whose condemnation by Apostle Peter was recorded in the Scriptures, an obvious sign of notoriety. See *Adversus haereses* 1.23.2; 1.24.1; 1.25.1–2.

6 McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*. 31.

#### 4.2 The Christological Content of the Twelve *Anathemas*

The *Anathemas* contained twelve theological propositions. Each proposition ended with an anathema upon those who did not accept it as correct.

Cyril's main goal was to discredit Nestorius, portraying him as an incompetent theologian. Throughout his correspondence with Nestorius, Cyril rebuked him for teaching that the Virgin Mary should not be called "θεοτόκος" (Birthgiver of God), since she did not give birth to the Logos *qua* God, but only to the human part of Jesus. Cyril attacked Nestorius's theological subtleties, arguing that any division of the divine and human elements in Christ would jeopardize the oneness of Christ with the Divine Logos. The *Anathemas* insist from the outset on the necessity of using the term "θεοτόκος" for the Virgin Mary, since "she gave birth in the flesh to the Word of God made flesh."<sup>7</sup> The title soon became the battle cry of Cyril and the various opponents of the Archbishop of Constantinople. Furthermore, its substantial popular appeal aided Cyril's cause.

In arguing his main point about the theological necessity of the union of divine and human natures in Christ so as to form one personal entity, Cyril had not made the best choice of language. His wording enabled the Antiochenes to suspect his Christology of being akin to that of Apollinarius,<sup>8</sup> which had been condemned some fifty years before at the Council of Constantinople in AD 381. In addition to θεοτόκος for the Virgin Mary, Cyril used as his key phrases one nature (μία φύσις) or one subsistence (μία ὑπόστασις) of God the Word made flesh (τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σαρκαωμένη).<sup>9</sup>

Cyril constantly insisted on language referring to the hypostatic or natural union (ὑποστατική or φυσική ἔνωσις) of the two natures in Christ. In the *Second Anathema*, he confessed the Logos to be "hypostatically united to the flesh so as to be One Christ with his own flesh . . . the same one at once God and man."<sup>10</sup>

7 ACO I, 1, 1, p. 40: "γεγέννηκε γὰρ σαρκικῶς σάρκα γεγονότα τὸν ἐκ θεοῦ λόγον." The translation of the *Anathemas* used here can be found in J.A. McGuckin's book on St. Cyril and the christological controversy; see: *ibid.*, 273–75.

8 In the first letter to Succensus, Cyril affirmed that in Jesus Christ after the Incarnation there was "one infleshed nature of God the Word" (μίαν φύσιν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σαρκαωμένη) (ACO I, 1, 6, p. 153). This expression originated in the Apollinarian milieu, though Cyril mistakenly thought that it came from St. Athanasius.

9 ACO I, 1, 6, p. 153.

10 ACO I, 1, 1, p. 40: "σαρκὶ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἡνώσθαι τὸν ἐκ θεοῦ πατὴρ λόγον ἕνα τε εἶναι Χριστὸν μετὰ τῆς ἰδίας σαρκός, τὸν αὐτὸν δηλονότι θεόν τε ὁμοῦ καὶ ἄνθρωπον." ET from McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*. 273.

The *Third Anathema* is directed against all those who “divide hypostases (ὑποστάσεις) of the One Christ after the union (ἔνωσις), connecting them only by a conjunction (συνάφεια) . . . and not rather by a combination in terms of natural unity (ἔνωσις φυσική).”<sup>11</sup> The *Fourth Anathema* is a further affirmation of the preceding two proposals. It prohibits interpretations of Scriptural sayings about and references to Christ (including Christ’s own sayings about himself)<sup>12</sup> which take them to indicate “two πρόσωπα or two ὑποστάσεις, attributing some of them to a man conceived of as separate from the Word of God, and attributing others (as divine) exclusively to the Word of God the Father.”<sup>13</sup>

The strong language referring to the unification of divinity and humanity in Jesus continues through the remaining Anathemas, in which Cyril insists that Christ is the “natural Son” (i.e., Logos) since the Logos became flesh (*Fifth Anathema*), that Christ is at once God and man (*Sixth Anathema*), that Jesus was not different from the Logos (*Seventh Anathema*), that Christ must be worshiped as one (*Eighth Anathema*), that the Spirit is Christ’s and is not foreign to him (*Ninth Anathema*), that the Logos was the high priest when he became flesh and Christ did not sacrifice himself for himself, but for humanity, since he was free from sin (*Tenth Anathema*), and that the Logos had personal flesh (*Eleventh Anathema*).<sup>14</sup> Finally, in the *Twelfth Anathema*, Cyril claimed that the Logos of God “suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, and tasted death in the flesh, becoming the first-born from the dead, although as God he is life and life-giving.”<sup>15</sup>

11 ACO I, 1, 1, p. 40: “Εἴ τις ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐνὸς Χριστοῦ διαιρεῖ τὰς ὑποστάσεις μετὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν, μόνῃ συνάπτων αὐτάς συναφείᾳ . . . καὶ οὐχὶ δὴ μάλλον συνῶδῳ τῇ καθ’ ἑνωσιν φυσικῇ, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.” ET from *ibid*.

12 For a more detailed discussion of the implications of this statement see Wickham’s analysis of the history of theological debates on the subject in Lionel R. Wickham, “The Ignorance of Christ: A Problem for the Ancient Theology,” in *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity. Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead in Celebration of his Eightieth Birthday 9th April 1993*, ed. Lionel R. Wickham and Caroline P. Bammel (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 213–26.

13 ACO I, 1, 1, p. 41: “Εἴ τις προσώπεις δυσὶν ἢ γοῦν ὑποστάσεων τὰς τε ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγελικοῖς καὶ ἀποστολικοῖς συγγράμασι διανέμει φωνὰς ἢ ἐπὶ Χριστῷ παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων λεγομένας ἢ παρ αὐτοῦ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὰς μὲν ὡς ἀνθρώπῳ παρὰ τὸν ἐκ θεοῦ λόγον ἰδικῶς νοουμένην προσάπτει, τὰς δὲ ὡς θεοπρεπεῖς μόνῳ τῷ ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς λόγῳ, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.” ET from McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*. 274. has been slightly amended for the purposes of terminological consistency.

14 See ACO I, 1, 1, pp. 41–42. For a translation see *ibid.*, 274–75.

15 *Ibid.*, 275.; cf. ACO I, 1, 1, p. 42: “Εἴ τις οὐχ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγον παθόντα σαρκὶ καὶ ἐσταυρωμένον σαρκὶ καὶ θανάτου γευσάμενον σαρκὶ γεγονότα τε πρωτότοκον ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, καθὼς ζῶν τέ ἐστι καὶ ζωοποιὸς ὡς θεός, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.”

### 4.3 Theodoret's Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas of Cyril

Theodoret replied to Cyril's *Anathemas* without excessively strong language and without open accusations of heresy, but he clearly points out the pitfalls of Cyril's Christological discourse. In Cyril's *Anathemas* Theodoret recognized the danger of a revival of Apollinarianism. Whether Theodoret truly believed that Cyril was Apollinarian is debatable. One has to bear in mind that Theodoret abstained from indicting Cyril with Apollinarianism even in the *Refutation of Cyril's Twelve Anathemas* and that he was also among the first of the Antiochene party to accept Cyril's orthodoxy in the years that followed.<sup>16</sup> Thus, it is more likely that Theodoret simply thought of Cyril's Christological terminology as inadequate and dangerously susceptible to Apollinarian interpretation.<sup>17</sup>

Be that as it may, Theodoret's association of Cyril's Christological formulas with Apollinarianism was not ungrounded, since their language was surprisingly similar to that of Apollinarius.<sup>18</sup> The few extant fragments show that Apollinarius also put a strong emphasis on the impossibility of distinguishing the Logos from His own flesh, proclaiming the Logos "one subsistence" (μία ὑπόστασις) with his own flesh.<sup>19</sup> He further affirms that the Blessed Virgin gave

16 Critical text of the *Refutations* in: ACO I, 1, 6, pp. 108–46. ET from Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 173–87.

17 Likewise, it is debatable whether Cyril honestly believed that Nestorius was "dividing Christ in two," despite all the latter's protestations, or whether he simply used the theological argument to discredit a dangerous opponent who threatened his authority.

Nestorius received certain refugees from Egypt who brought before the episcopal throne of Constantinople serious charges against Cyril of Alexandria. Nestorius threatened to open the case officially and attempted to use it as leverage against the archbishop of Alexandria to gain more influence. This case would have seriously damaged Cyril's prestige in Egypt, and he was determined to prevent it. Besides, he was very sensitive to the newly acquired rights of Constantinople, whose bishop, according to Canon 3 of the Council of Constantinople in AD 381, received rights and privileges equal to those of the bishop of Rome. This effectively downgraded Alexandria in prestige, from second to third place in the Christian world. Conveniently, the charge of heresy against Nestorius accomplished the task of preventing Cyril's public humiliation and Nestorius's affirmation of the power of his see in the East. Cf. Socrates, HE 7, 7 and 7, 13. See also McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*. 7.

18 Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 172.

19 Apollinarius, *De fide et incarnatione* 3 (Hans Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule*, Texte und Untersuchungen 1 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1904). 194.): "... οὐδὲ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ τὴν σάρκα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ λέγομεν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς ἀγίας παρθένου Μαρίας ὁμολογοῦμεν σεσαρκῶσθαι τὸν Θεὸν λόγον καὶ οὐ διαιροῦμεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ σαρκός, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἓν πρόσωπον, μία ὑπόστασις, ὅλος ἄνθρωπος, ὅλος Θεός." Cf. also Idem, *De fide et*

birth to the Logos and thus is properly known as θεοτόκος, and that it was the Logos who was crucified, since, as the Scriptures testify, the Logos was “one nature, one hypostasis, one activity, one person” with his flesh.<sup>20</sup> However, despite the inadequate theological language that could lead to an Apollinarian interpretation, Cyril’s Christology was not Apollinarian. Recognizing this, the conciliar decisions of the mid-fifth century rightly exonerated his Christology from charges of heresy (Council of Zeugma).

It must be noted that when Cyril wrote the *Anathemas* in AD 430, other than the Christological *kerygma* with its excessively generalizing tendencies, there was hardly a well established and universally observed Christological standard. Theologians debating Christology were treading upon largely unexplored ground, and personal opinions were considered orthodox if they remained faithful to their respective traditions, which were usually of a local character. Thus, Cyril’s Christological opinions were not immune to close theological scrutiny. This fact is evident in the Antiochene party’s response to his *Twelve Anathemas*, and most of all in Theodoret’s *Refutation*, where he did not hesitate to draw a parallel between Cyril’s Christology and that of Apollinarius.<sup>21</sup>

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*incarnatione* 4 (ibid., 195.): “...ἀχώριστός ἐστι καὶ ἀμέριστος τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σαρκός, [καὶ τὴν πρὸς θεὸν λόγον ἔνωσιν] τῆς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ὁμοουσιότητος τοῦ λόγου τῆς πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἐπικοινωνεῖ τῷ ὀνόματι ἢ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ, οὐ καὶ σὰρξ ἐστίν, εἴγε ἀληθῶς σάρκα ὁμολογοῦμεν γεγενῆσθαι, τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου· εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐπικοινωνοῖ, πάντῃ ἀπηλλοτριῶται.”

20 Apollinarius, *De fide et incarnatione* 6 (ibid., 198–99.): “...ἡ παρθένος ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς σάρκα τεκοῦσα τὸν λόγον ἔτικτεν καὶ ἦν θεοτόκος, καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸ σῶμα σταυρώσαντες τὸν θεὸν ἐσταύρωσαν, καὶ οὐδεμία διαίρεσις τοῦ λόγου καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ ἐν ταῖς θείαις προφέρεται γραφαῖς, ἀλλ’ ἔστι μία φύσις, μία ὑπόστασις, μία ἐνέργεια, ἓν πρόσωπον, ὁλος θεος, ὁλος ἄνθρωπος ὁ αὐτός.”

21 Cyril enjoyed great prestige and reverence due to the glorious history of the episcopal see that he occupied for many years. The see of Alexandria had exercised Metropolitan rights overall Egypt, Pentapolis, and Libya since immemorial antiquity. This status was confirmed in Canon 6 at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325, which exercised supreme authority in Christendom: “τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθνη κρατεῖτω τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ Λιβύῃ καὶ Πενταπόλει ὥστε τὸν Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπίσκοπον πάντων τούτων ἔχειν τὴν ἐξουσίαν...” (“The ancient customs of Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis shall be maintained, according to which the bishop of Alexandria has the authority over all these places...”). See Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. 8–9.

Besides gaining supreme and unquestioned authority at home, Cyril made a name for himself abroad as well. He entered high ecclesiastical politics as early as AD 402, when, as secretary to his uncle Theophilus of Antioch, he took part in the condemnation of John Chrysostom at the Council of the Oak. See Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000). 6.

#### 4.4 The Nature of the Christological Debate in Theodoret's *Refutation of Cyril's Twelve Anathemas*

Cyril's Christological language in the *Twelve Anathemas* was highly problematic for Theodoret and the Antiochenes. For instance, as Pásztori-Kupán has remarked, Cyril's use of the term ὑπόστασις, previously used in theological

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Moreover, his keen intellect and extensive learning on the one hand, and, on the other, his success at continuing his uncle's oppressive politics for many years, earned him universal respect and power. Cyril's political agenda had four goals: first, firm hostility toward pagans, heretics, and Jews; second, maintaining good relations with Rome; third, resisting the expansion of the episcopal authority of Constantinople; and fourth, cultivating close ties with monks (see *ibid.*).

However, Cyril miscalculated his influence in the theological atmosphere of the Late Antiquity. In the same Canon 6 of the Council of Nicaea, Antioch received just as much prestige as Alexandria: “Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐπαρχίαις τὰ πρεσβεῖα σώζεσθαι ταῖς ἐκακλησίαις.” (“Similarly in Antioch and the other provinces the prerogatives of the churches are to be preserved.”) See Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. 9. While Alexandria promoted its agenda aggressively, arguing for authority based on the Apostolic succession from Mark and its generally recognized fame as the see of learning, Antioch quietly nurtured the notion of its ecclesiastical nobility (its venerable succession of honor from the Apostle Peter, its first bishop, and the likes of Ignatius of Antioch), which resurfaced when its interests were at stake. Referring to Dioscorus, Archbishop of Alexandria, who after succeeding Cyril of Alexandria continued attacks on Antiochene Christology, Theodoret says that the Alexandrian boasts of occupying the see of St. Mark, although “...he perfectly well knows that the Antiochene metropolis possesses the throne of the great Peter, who was teacher of the blessed Mark, and first and coryphaeus of the chorus of the apostles.” (Ep. 86—NPNF<sup>2</sup> 282; cf. Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 1–95, 208).

Antiochenes were also well aware that the Alexandrians had no right to interfere outside of their diocese. In the same letter Theodoret protested: “When the blessed Fathers were assembled in that imperial city [ref. to Canon 2 of the Council of Constantinople AD 381, which confined activities of bishops to their own dioceses] in harmony with them that had sat in council at Nicaea [ref. to Canon 6], they distinguished the dioceses, and assigned to each diocese the management of its own affairs, expressly enjoining that none should intrude from one diocese into another. They ordered that the bishop of Alexandria should administer the government of Egypt alone, and every diocese its own affairs.” (Ep. 86—NPNF<sup>2</sup> 282; cf. Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm.* 1–95, 208).

In view of this, it is evident that despite the great political power and prestige which Cyril enjoyed, outside of his diocese his theological propositions were subject to close scrutiny, just as everyone else's were.

debates to distinguish the reality of the persons within the Trinity, was remarkably close to the language of Apollinarius of Laodicea.<sup>22</sup>

However, Pásztori-Kupán draws the somewhat hasty conclusion that Theodoret suspected Cyril himself of deliberately teaching an outright heresy. He holds that Cyril's "introduction of the term hypostasis into Christology, its equation with physis, as well as the continuous Logos-sarx manner of speech, must have led Theodoret to believe that Cyril simply revived one of the subtlest heresies concerning the Person of the Saviour."<sup>23</sup> Theodoret's polemic with Cyril was much more delicate. Although Theodoret argued against the dangers of Apollinarianism in Cyril's Christological definitions, there is no evidence in the *Refutation of Cyril's Twelve Anathemas* that he actually suspected Cyril himself of being a heretic.

In the *Refutations*, Theodoret chose a guarded but firm tone to point out the inadequacies of Cyril's Christological formulas. In challenging Cyril's notion of *hypostatic union* as expressed in the *Second Anathema*, Theodoret says: "if the author of these [assertions] wants to say by the union according to hypostasis that it was a mixture of flesh and Godhead, we shall contradict him with all zeal and shall refute the blasphemy."<sup>24</sup> However, he stopped short of accusing him of being a heretic.

Furthermore, the *Refutations* are more an account of the Christological tradition of Theodoret's milieu, i.e., Antioch. Their characteristic is a passive, almost defensive tone, a tone of explanation rather than an outright attack. In this work, Theodoret, although scandalized and outraged, refrained from hasty accusations and acted as a teacher rather than a prosecutor.

At times Theodoret's analyses of Cyril's *Twelve Anathemas* even assume a patronizing tone of ridicule: "the meaning of the expressions is unclear and abstruse . . . their senselessness is clear for the pious."<sup>25</sup> He points out that Cyril's positions are untenable because they effectively "anathematize candidly not only those who at present are holding pious [opinions], but also those who in the old times were heralds of the truth, and even the very writers of the divine gospels, the chorus of the holy apostles, and, above all these, Gabriel the archangel."<sup>26</sup> In another place he chides: "[Cyril] the accurate inspector of divine dogmas has not only anathematized prophets and apostles or even

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22 Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 172.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 175.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid., 182.



the archangel Gabriel, but extended the blasphemy even to the Saviour of all himself.”<sup>27</sup> Theodoret occasionally referred to Cyril’s formulas with a certain dose of contempt and arrogance, characteristic for disputes of the period.<sup>28</sup> Reflecting sarcastically on Cyril’s propositions, he says: “the highly astute author of these phrases made synonyms into opposites,” and later with a dose of incredulity he adds: “either he is perhaps ignorant of what he is saying, or he blasphemes knowingly.”<sup>29</sup>

For Theodoret, Cyril’s formulations betray ignorance: they reflect their author’s theological inadequacy and incompetence. In arguing vehemently against Cyril’s *Second Anathema*, he pointed out that the terminology it exhibited—the use of ὑποστατική or φυσική ἔνωσις as synonyms—is singularly susceptible to Apollinarian interpretations as teaching the commingling of natures, viz. the confusion of divinity and humanity in Christ in which neither would remain what it was.<sup>30</sup> After demonstrating the fallacy of this terminology, Theodoret refrained from drawing the logical conclusion and making an accusation of heresy against Cyril’s person. He merely says: “the union according to ὑπόστασις, which in my opinion is put before us instead of mixture, is superfluous. It is sufficient to talk about the union, which both shows the properties of the natures and teaches us to worship the one Christ.”<sup>31</sup> Evidently, Theodoret thought of Cyril’s Christology as inadequate rather than deliberately heretical. Therefore, the *Refutation* ought not be understood as a polemical work in which Theodoret attacked his opponent with all available means, but rather as an exposition of Christological teaching for the purposes of edification, like the *Expositio*.

#### 4.4.1 The Content of the *Refutation of Cyril’s Twelve Anathemas*

The *Refutations* are preserved among the documents of the Council of Ephesus of AD 431.<sup>32</sup> They are written in a dialogic form, i.e., Theodoret does not only argue against and correct Cyril’s propositions, but he also sets out Cyril’s

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>28</sup> For example, the same style can be found in Gregory of Nyssa’s arguments against Eunomius of Cyzicus, where he is referred to in a derogatory way as “doctrinaire,” “a pamphleteer,” and “a new theologian” among other less-than-flattering epithets; see, for example, *Against Eunomius* 1.27, 4.1 (NPNF<sup>2</sup> 5. 71–72, 152).

<sup>29</sup> Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 176.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. (The translation has been amended for the purposes of terminological consistency.)

<sup>32</sup> ACO I, 1, 6, pp. 108–46.



Christology, while staying in continuous communication with Scriptural and patristic testimony.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the reader finds first the text of Cyril's anathemas, followed by a substantially longer refutation. Theodoret did not spare any effort or theological erudition in countering the anathemas.<sup>34</sup>

The main objective of the *Refutations* was to safeguard the reality of Christ's humanity after the Incarnation while concurrently preserving the actuality of the union of divine and human natures. Perhaps the best summary of Theodoret's understanding of the union is offered in the *Refutation of the Eighth Anathema*:

On the one hand, as I have often said, the doxology which we bring forth to the Ruler Christ is one, and we confess the same One to be at once God and man, since this is the term 'union' has taught us; on the other hand, we shall not decline from talking about the distinctive properties of the natures. For neither God the word accepted the change into flesh, nor yet again did the human being lose what he had been and was transformed into the nature of God. Consequently, whilst upholding the properties of each nature, we worship the Ruler Christ.<sup>35</sup>

Theodoret's keen understanding of the ontological divide between the created and uncreated orders (i.e., humanity and divinity) which he had emphasized in the *Expositio* resurfaced in the *Refutation* through the affirmation that the union of the two must safeguard the properties of each order: "... neither the Logos accepted the change into flesh, nor yet again did the man lose what he had been and was transformed into the nature of God" (*Refutation of the Eighth*

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33 Uncharacteristically for that period, Theodoret referred to writings of the "fathers" as sources of authority in support of his counter-arguments: "... we are completely ignorant of the union according to the hypostasis, as being alien and foreign to the divine Scriptures and to the fathers who have interpreted these" (*Refutation of the Second Anathema*), or "... we do not reject the term 'God-bearing man' (*theophoros anthropos*), as uttered by many of the holy fathers, one among whom is the great Basil, who uses this term in his work [addressed] to Amphilochius about the Holy Spirit, and in his explanation of Psalm fifty-nine." (*Refutation of the Fifth Anathema*). See: Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 175 and 79.

34 In the critical text by E. Schwartz, Theodoret's *Refutations* are part of Cyril's *Apology of the Twelve Chapters* (i.e., Anathemas). Thus, the format found there is: 1. Cyril's Anathema, 2. Theodoret's Refutation, 3. Cyril's Apology of the Anathema (i.e., answer to Theodoret's Refutation). See: ACO I, 1, 6, pp. 108–46.

35 Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 181. (Slightly modified translation to reflect the original meaning of the Greek text.)

*Anathema*).<sup>36</sup> Thus, in the union the properties of both orders or substances must be preserved.

As has been mentioned previously, for Theodoret there was no alternative to this type of union. In a union of commingling, both natures would lose their respective properties. This type of union would be possible only among substances of the same order (i.e., created order). The result would be a third substance within the same (created) order. However, this type of union is a logical impossibility when it comes to a cross-order union.

Theoretically, a mixture of divinity (for Theodoret, only divinity belongs to the uncreated order) and humanity (belongs to created order) would necessitate the loss of properties of both natures; a third nature, a cross-nature between the two would be created. This nature would either fall into a category in between the uncreated and created orders (which is a logical impossibility and must be rejected),<sup>37</sup> or it would belong to the created order since it received existence in time as a result of a particular union. The second option Theodoret characterized as an outright, self-evident blasphemy for it posited created nature in God.

Thus, Scriptural evidence aside, it was out of logical necessity that Theodoret argued for the union of God the Logos and a rational and ensouled human nature: “we proclaim the ensouled (ἐμψυχον) and rational (λογική) flesh of the Lord to be life-giving (ζωοποιόν), through the life-giving Godhead united to it.”<sup>38</sup> In this union the divine nature could not become susceptible to the shortcomings of human nature; it had to retain its properties and remain immutable (ἀτρεπτος), unmixed (ἀσύγχυτος), and impassible (ἀπαθής).

#### 4.5 The Exegetical Foundation for the “Immutable,” “Unmixed,” and “Impassible”

As previously mentioned, in the *Third and Fourth Anathema* Cyril advanced the notion of a “natural union” (ἐνωσις φυσική) of Christ’s divinity and

36 Ibid. The Pásztori-Kupán translation uses “God-Word” to render the Greek designation of the second person of the Holy Trinity. In this book the word “Logos” is the designated term for God the Word, and the Pásztori-Kupán translation has been consistently amended for the purposes of clarity.

37 Cf. *Expositio rectae fidei* 4 (von Otto 12; PG 6, 1211C): “... ἅπαντα εἰς τε κτιστὸν καὶ ἄκτιστον διαιρούμενα· εἴ τι γὰρ ἐστὶ ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν, ἢ ἄκτιστος φύσις ἐστὶν ἢ κτιστή.” (... everything [is] divided into the [categories of] created and uncreated. If a thing exists, it is either of uncreated or created nature).

38 Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 186.

humanity, drawing the conclusion that one must not separate the subject of attribution of Scriptural evidence about Jesus into humanity or divinity. Due to the “natural union” of divinity and humanity achieved in the Incarnation, all attributions refer to one subject.

Cyril's *Fourth Anathema* seems to have been one of the focal points of Antiochene criticism. By denying the possibility of the dual predication of Christ's attributes, Cyril effectively attacked the ancient and revered exegetical tradition of the great Antiochene teachers Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, who, in their interpretation of difficult Gospel passages in which were displayed weaknesses of Christ's human nature (ignorance, fear, sorrow, need for sleep or food, etc.), attempted to resolve the tension between Christ's divinity and humanity by ascribing the human weaknesses to Christ's humanity, but the miracles to his divinity.

Cyril argued that such a division of the subject of attribution was untenable, since he saw in it a rending of Christ into two distinct entities. When Theodoret of Cyrrhus rebutted Cyril's *Fourth Anathema*, he pointed out that it was problematic to attribute Christ's self-professed ignorance to the divine element in Him, and suggested instead that it should be attributed to his humanity. Cyril responded by accusing him of rending Christ in two.<sup>39</sup>

As regards the understanding of Scriptural passages that reveal properties of both divine and human natures in Jesus, particular attention was paid to the exegesis of Gospel passages that indicate Christ's limitations, especially his ignorance (Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32). These passages had been a point of considerable Christological debate before the controversy between Cyril and Theodoret (i.e., among the Antiochenes).<sup>40</sup>

However, Cyril's master, Athanasius of Alexandria, had himself made distinctions in predicating human attributes to Christ. In his disputes with theologians of Arian provenance Athanasius argued that certain attributes of Christ which were evident in the Bible and characteristic of humans (i.e., ignorance) must be attributed to his human nature: “Let us, who love Christ and bear Christ within us, know that the Word, not as ignorant, considered as Word, has said ‘I know not,’ for He knows, but as shewing His manhood, in that

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39 See Theodoret's *Refutation of Cyril's Fourth Anathema* (ACO I, 1, 6, pp. 121ff.). See also: Wickham, “The Ignorance of Christ: A Problem for the Ancient Theology,” 223–24; Raymond Moloney, “Approaches to Christ's Knowledge in the Patristic Era,” in *Studies in Patristic Christology*, ed. Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey (Dublin, Ireland and Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 1998), 57–58.

40 See Wickham, “The Ignorance of Christ: A Problem for the Ancient Theology,” 223–25.

to be ignorant is proper to man, and that He had put on flesh that was ignorant, being in which, He said according to the flesh, 'I know not.'"<sup>41</sup>

Athanasius repeats the same idea about the alleged ignorance of Christ throughout his discussion, arguing that the language of ignorance found in the Bible refers specifically to Christ's "flesh," viz. humanity, while *qua* God, Christ is omniscient. Moreover, as Wickham has noted, Athanasius argued that Christ's ignorance was ostensible rather than factual.<sup>42</sup> Christ's ignorance was an attribute of his humanity, while as God-Logos He shared the fullness of divine knowledge with the Father.<sup>43</sup> Thus, references to the ignorance of Christ are nothing but a turn of phrase used by way of condescension to the limitations of our human nature: "The Son then did know, as being the Word; for He implied this in what He said,—'I know but it is not for you to know'; for it was for your sakes that sitting also on the mount I said according to the flesh, 'No, not the Son knows,' for the profit of you and all."<sup>44</sup> Cyril is silent on the obvious question of how Athanasius could possibly escape the consequences of the *Fourth Anathema*.

Arguing against the Anomoeans (Ep. 236) in a similar manner, Basil of Caesarea solves the problem by teaching that the Son does indeed have the Father's knowledge (cf. John 16:15), but he has it only because he shares in the Father's divinity. The Father as God is the source of the knowledge and no being besides God has it. In other words, the Son has the knowledge only because the Father, whose nature the Son shares, possesses it.

Gregory of Nazianzus also argued that Jesus Christ indeed possessed the knowledge as God, while as a man he shared in the limitations of human nature:

<sup>41</sup> *Contra Arianos* III, 45 (Athanasius of Alexandria, *Oratio III contra Arianos*. 357.; ET in NPNF<sup>2</sup> 4, 418; cf. PG 26. 417): "... οἱ δὲ φιλόχριστοι καὶ χριστοφόροι γινώσκουμεν, ὡς οὐκ ἀγνοῶν ὁ Λόγος, ἢ Λόγος ἐστίν, ἔλεγεν, Οὐκ οἶδα οἶδε γὰρ ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον δεικνύς, ὅτι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἴδιον ἐστὶ τὸ ἀγνοεῖν, καὶ ὅτι σάρκα ἀγνοοῦσαν ἐνεδύσατο, ἐν ᾗ ὢν, σαρκικῶς ἔλεγεν Οὐκ οἶδα."

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *Contra Arianos* III, 42 ff. Critical text in: Athanasius of Alexandria, *Oratio III contra Arianos*, ed. Karin Metzler and Kyriakos Savvidis, vol. 1, Part 1, No. 3, Athanasius Werke (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000). For a discussion of the ignorance of Christ in Athanasius see: Wickham, "The Ignorance of Christ: A Problem for the Ancient Theology," 223–25.

<sup>43</sup> Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* III, 46, 5B: "οἶδεν ἄρα ὁ υἱὸς γινώσκων τὰ πάντα καὶ γινώσκων τὸν ἑαυτοῦ πατέρα, ἥς γνώσεως οὔτε μείζων οὔτε τελειότερον ἂν τι γένοιτο" (Athanasius of Alexandria, *Oratio III contra Arianos*. 358.; ET in: NPNF<sup>2</sup> 4, 418).

<sup>44</sup> *Contra Arianos* III, 49, 1C: "οἶδεν ἄρα ὁ υἱὸς λόγος ὢν· τοῦτο γὰρ λέγων ἐσήμανεν, ὅτι "ἐγὼ οἶδα, ἀλλ'"οὐκ ἐστὶν ὑμῶν γινῶναι· δι' ὑμᾶς γὰρ καὶ ἐν τῷ ὅρει καθήμενος σαρκικῶς εἶπον· 'οὐδὲ ὁ υἱὸς οἶδε' διὰ τὸ ὑμῶν καὶ πάντων συμφέρον" (ibid., 360.; ET in: NPNF<sup>2</sup> 4, 420).

Is it not evident to all that He [Christ] knows as God, and knows not as Man, if one separates the perceptible from that which is in thought? For the absolute and unqualified use of the name of the Son, without the explanation of whose Son, enables us to think that we should understand the ignorance in the most pious manner, by attributing it to the human, and not to the divine.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, there was a long and venerable tradition of attributing characteristics of Christ to His two natures. Theodoret remained faithful to the tradition; for him Christ's ignorance ought of necessity to be attributed to His humanity, since as Logos he possesses all the knowledge of the Father whose unchanged image he is:

How then could he [Christ] be the unchanged image of his Begetter if he does not have all that belongs to the Begetter? Thus, if on one hand he speaks the truth when saying that he is ignorant, anyone may accept this about him. On the other hand, though, if he knows the day, but wishing to hide it he says that he is ignorant, look into what a blasphemy the conclusion leads. Either the truth lies, or it cannot appropriately be called the truth if it contains anything of its contrary. Yet if the truth does not lie, neither is the Logos ignorant of the day which he himself made and he himself appointed, in which he intends to judge the world, but rather he has the knowledge of the Father, since he is [the Father's] unchanged image.<sup>46</sup>

#### 4.6 “Immutable” in the Refutation of Cyril’s Twelve Anathemas

As in the *Expositio rectae fidei*, the immutability of divinity in the union of Christ is the most debated point in this work, which testifies to Theodoret’s concern that Cyril’s Christological model would be susceptible to both Arian and Apollinarian interpretations (cf. *Refutations of the Fourth and Eleventh*

45 *Oration* 30, 15 (Grégoire de Nazianze, *Discours 27–31* (*Discours théologiques*), ed. Paul Gallay and Maurice Jourjon, vol. 250, Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1978). 258): “Ἡ πᾶσιν εὐδηλον, ὅτι γινώσκει μὲν ὡς Θεός, ἀγνοεῖν δὲ φησιν ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ἂν τις τὸ φαινόμενον χωρίσῃ τοῦ νοουμένου; Τὸ γὰρ ἀπόλυτον εἶναι τοῦ Υἱοῦ τὴν προσηγορίαν καὶ ἄσχετον, οὐ προσκειμένου τῷ Υἱῷ τοῦ τινος, ταύτην ἡμῖν διδωσι τὴν ὑπόνοιαν, ὥστε τὴν ἄνοιαν ὑπολαμβάνειν ἐπὶ τὸ εὐσεβέστερον, τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ, μὴ τῷ θεῷ, ταύτην λογιζομένους.”

46 Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 178.

*Anathemas*). He constantly insists that: "Logos was neither made flesh by nature, nor was turned into flesh: for the divine is immutable and invariable... the divine is immutable and invariable, it is incapable of change or alteration... if the immutable cannot be changed, then the Logos did not become flesh by changing" (*Refutation of the First Anathema*).<sup>47</sup>

The same thought is repeated throughout the *Refutations*: "the Logos did not change into the form of a servant, but remained what it was, took on the form of a servant" (*Refutation of the First Anathema*);<sup>48</sup> "... that the Logos was made flesh by any change [τροπή] we do not only refuse to say, but even charge with impiety those who do" (*Refutation of the Fifth Anathema*);<sup>49</sup> "... the Logos was not made flesh by being changed, but rather assumed flesh which had a rational soul" (*Refutation of the Sixth Anathema*);<sup>50</sup> "... neither the Logos accepted the change into flesh, nor yet again did the man lose what he had been" (*Refutation of the Eighth Anathema*);<sup>51</sup> "... the unchangeable nature was not changed into the nature of flesh" (*Refutation of the Tenth Anathema*);<sup>52</sup> "... the Logos was not changed into the nature of flesh, but rather has assumed nature as his own flesh" (*Refutation of the Eleventh Anathema*).<sup>53</sup>

In the *First Refutation*, Theodoret emphasized the necessity of God's immutability and invariability. For him, Cyril's understanding of the Incarnation as "the birth according to the flesh of the Logos of God made flesh" would be acceptable only if understood not in terms of change and alteration, but as the "taking on of flesh." Thus, the Incarnation did not involve change in the nature of the Logos: "Logos was neither made flesh by nature, nor was he turned into flesh, for the divine is immutable and invariable."<sup>54</sup> Thus the Logos remained immutable in the Incarnation.

It should also be noted here that in the *Refutation of the First Anathema* one also finds evidence for Theodoret's understanding of the subject of unity of the natures in Christ. While arguing for the immutability of the divine nature in the Incarnation, he says: "... the form of God did not change into the form of a servant, but remaining what it was, took on the form of a servant."<sup>55</sup> Thus,

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47 Ibid., 173.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., 179.

50 Ibid., 180.

51 Ibid., 181.

52 Ibid., 184.

53 Ibid., 186.

54 Ibid., 173.

55 Ibid., 173–74.

as in the *Expositio*, Theodoret repeatedly affirms here that in the Incarnation it was the Logos himself who took on humanity, thus teaching that there was one subject of the Incarnation—the Logos.

#### 4.7 Communicatio idiomatum and the “Immutable”

For Theodoret, it is obvious that the divine nature, being infinitely more exalted than the human nature, has precedence in the union of the Incarnation. In his mind, there is an interaction between the two natures. However, *de facto* it is a unidirectional phenomenon: the divine nature affects the human nature but not vice versa. In the *Refutation of the Seventh Anathema*, Theodoret says that in the union the human nature was raised from the dead, carried into heaven, and received immortality from the divine nature—all characteristics foreign to it.<sup>56</sup>

Theodoret’s understanding of the change in the properties of Christ’s human nature after the Resurrection echoes Gregory of Nyssa’s teaching. Gregory taught that after the Resurrection Christ’s humanity underwent a transformation and, in a sense, achieved a fuller unity with the Logos. Thus, after the Resurrection, the passions of human nature cannot be associated with Christ. Gregory says:

As a result, these [natures] no longer [i.e., after his resurrection] seem to exist separately on their own, according to some kind of distinction, but the mortal nature, mingled with the divine in a way that overwhelms it, is made new, and shares in the divine nature—just as if, let us say, the process of mixture were to make a drop of vinegar, mingled in the sea, into sea itself, simply by the fact that the natural quality of that liquid no longer remained perceptible within the infinite mass that overwhelmed it.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>57</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* III. 3. 68–9 (GNO II, 132: 26–133: 4) (ET from Brian E. Daley, “‘Heavenly Man’ and ‘Eternal Christ’: Apollinarius and Gregory of Nyssa on the Personal Identity of the Savior,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10, no. 4 (2002): 481–82.). Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Antirrheticus against Apollinarius* (GNO III.1, 201: 10–20); Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, 13–14. Both Daley and Behr detect a shift in Gregory’s narrative on the status of Jesus’s humanity after the Resurrection. Moreover, Behr finds a similar occurrence in Athanasius (*Inc.* 28, 44); Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, 26. For a history of research on the Christology of Gregory of Nyssa see Morwenna Ludlow, *Gregory of Nyssa, Ancient and (Post)modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). 96–107. Ludlow helpfully surveys the scholarship on Gregory’s



Change is a logical impossibility for the divinity, whose characteristic is absolute perfection: "the divine is immutable and invariable, it is incapable of change or alteration" (*Refutation of the First Anathema*).<sup>58</sup> Yet human nature is mutable, being part of the created and limited order. Theodoret does not make allowance for the possibility that a lesser category (human nature) can affect and change the superior, uncreated category of existence. Only divinity belongs to the latter and it is immune to any change by its very nature (cf. *Refutations of the First, Fifth and Sixth Anathemas*).<sup>59</sup>

Therefore, Theodoret does have an understanding of *Communicatio idiomatum* in the union effected in the Incarnation. The exchange of attributes of the natures is understood more as a corrective process in which the divine nature perfects and compensates for the shortcomings of the human nature, rather than as an equal partnership of the two natures. Thus, just as in the *Expositio*, Theodoret's Christology at this stage is not symmetrical, but the divine nature of the Logos is the principle constituent of the union.

This type of *Communicatio idiomatum* is logically necessary to preserve the respective attributes of both the divine and human natures. The divine nature cannot be affected by the human nature in the union, since it is an absolute perfection. At the same time, it is natural for the human element in Christ to benefit from the union with Godhead and to progress in perfection—hence the resurrection from the dead, ascension, and immortality.

#### 4.8 "Unmixed" in the Refutation of Cyril's Twelve Anathemas

Neither in the *Expositio* nor in the *Refutation* did Theodoret's Christological model make any allowance for the commingling of the divine and human natures in the union of Christ's incarnation. Besides being a logical impossibility, for Theodoret such a union is also a blasphemy which robs the Logos of its Godhead:

[if] the union according to hypostasis... was a mixture of flesh and Godhead, we shall contradict... with all zeal and shall refute the blasphemy. For mixture is necessarily followed by confusion, and the

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Christological teaching and terminology. Although she does not clearly state her own opinion, the amount of attention paid to the positive assessments which see in Gregory's Christology an anticipation of Chalcedon indicates that Ludlow endorses this opinion.

58 Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 173.

59 Ibid., 173, 79–80.



admission of confusion destroys the property of each nature. Things that have blended do not remain what they were before; to say this about the Logos . . . would be entirely absurd.<sup>60</sup>

Similar arguments are advanced in the *Refutation of the Third and Fourth Anathemas*, where Cyril is charged with propounding a commingling of natures in Christ, which according to Theodoret results in Arian and Eunomian heresies. He goes on to say:

Having assumed that a mixture had taken place, he proposes that there is no distinction of terms in those uttered in the holy gospels or in the apostolic writings . . . let then this exact teacher of the divine dogmas explain how he would refute the blasphemy of heretics, while attributing to the Logos what was uttered humbly and suitably by the form of the servant (*Refutation of the Fourth Anathema*).<sup>61</sup>

Theodoret's understanding of the quality of the union is best described in the *Refutation of the Fifth Anathema*: "whilst we apply the phrase 'partaking' [κοινωνία] we worship both him who took [τὸν λαβόντα] and that which was taken [τὸ ληφθέν] as one Son, nevertheless, we acknowledge the distinction [διαφορά] of the natures."<sup>62</sup>

For Theodoret the union of the divine and human natures was quite real. It was the closest possible union; so close, in fact, that one could speak about one subject of personal reality in Christ. He does not hesitate to say that in the Incarnation it was the Logos himself who "formed a temple for himself in the virgin womb" (*Refutation of the First Anathema*).<sup>63</sup> Also, through this union the divine nature, being infinitely greater, has also affected the human nature—the human nature became immortal:

. . . the nature of the human being is mortal, yet the Logos is life and life-giver, and raised up the temple which had been destroyed by the Jews [Christ's body], and carried it into heaven . . . [the temple] being mortal by nature it became immortal by its union with the Logos, then did it receive what it did not have . . . (*Refutation of the Seventh Anathema*)<sup>64</sup>

60 Theodoret, *Refutation of the Second Anathema* (ibid., 175.).

61 Ibid., 177.

62 Ibid., 179.

63 Ibid., 174.

64 Ibid., 181.

Consequently, the union of the divine and human in Christ was a reality resulting in the exchange of properties. The human nature in the union received certain properties of the divine nature, while the divine nature through the union with humanity “emptied itself” and deigned to impassibly undergo in Jesus all experiences of the human nature. Thus, Theodoret can accept the term *Theotokos*: “since the form [of the servant] was not disrobed of the form of God, but was a temple holding the indwelling God . . . we label the Virgin not “man-bearer” [*anthropotokos*] [only], but also “God-bearer”, applying the former title to the fashioning, forming and conception, and the latter to the union.” (*Refutation of the First Anathema*).<sup>65</sup>

#### 4.9 The Title “Theotokos” and the “Unmixed”

In the *Refutation of the First Anathema*, Theodoret accepts the validity of the title “Theotokos” (Birthgiver of God) for the Blessed Virgin Mary, while upholding, at the same time, the reality of Christ’s humanity. For him, the Virgin Mary should be called Theotokos as well, and not only *Anthropotokos* (Birthgiver of man).

The latter title is accorded to her because she gave birth to the human element in the union achieved through Incarnation.<sup>66</sup> Since for Theodoret, God belongs to the uncreated order,<sup>67</sup> Logos *qua* God could not have been changed by nature into a human being and consequently could not have been born:

... the One [Logos] being before ages, being God and being with God, being together with the Father and known as well as worshipped together with the Father, was not himself by nature begotten by the Virgin after being conceived, fashioned and formed, not taking the beginning of [his] existence from there [i.e., from Mary], but rather he formed a temple for himself in the virgin womb and was together with that which was fashioned, conceived, formed and begotten.<sup>68</sup>

And yet, in the Incarnation, the Logos was united to humanity. Referring to Cor 1:19 and 2:9 (“for in him all the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell bodily”), Theodoret argues that “...since the form [of the servant]

65 Ibid., 174.

66 Ibid.

67 *Expositio rectae fidei* 4 and 7.

68 Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 174.

was not disrobed of the form of God, but was a temple holding the indwelling God... we label the Virgin not 'Birthgiver of man' (ἀνθρωποτόκος) [only], but also 'Birthgiver of God,' applying the former title to the fashioning, forming and conception, and the latter to the union."<sup>69</sup> The Virgin Mary is called θεοτόκος "...on account of the union of the form of God with the conceived form of the servant."<sup>70</sup>

#### 4.10 The Hypostatic Union and the "Unmixed"

In the *Refutation of the Second Anathema*, Theodoret strongly objected to Cyril's introduction of the language of hypostatic union (ὑποστατική ἔνωσις) of the divinity and humanity, of a union of the Logos with the flesh in Christ according to ὑπόστασις. In this formulation, Theodoret saw a danger of understanding the union as a mixture of the divine and human natures as to produce a *tertium quid*, a third nature in which the two constituent natures would necessarily lose their respective properties:

...if the author of these [assertions] wants to say by the union according to hypostasis that it was a mixture of flesh and Godhead, we shall contradict him with all zeal and shall refute the blasphemy. For mixture is necessarily followed by confusion, and the admission of confusion destroys the property of each nature. Things which have been blended do not remain what they were before... If a mixture had taken place, neither did God remain God nor was the temple recognized as a temple, but rather the temple was God by nature and God was temple...<sup>71</sup>

Theodoret's rationale for the objection was preservation of the distinct properties of both natures. Thus, the conception of the union ought not to suggest a commingling of the natures, as if the divine nature consumed the human nature. Likewise, the union ought not be conceived of as engendering a *tertium quid*, viz. there must be no blending of the natures, but each nature (especially the divine nature) remains unchanged.

The use of the expression "hypostatic union" was rather novel and daring theological jargon, especially bearing in mind that the term ὑπόστασις had a very long history, which underwent revisions from the third century Monarchianist

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., 175.

debates to the fourth century Trinitarian controversies. As previously argued, in its latest form up until the time of Theodoret, the term was used to denote the substantive reality of the existence of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. In the Trinitarian language, ὑπόστασις was not synonymous with φύσις, i.e., in the case of Trinity, one ought to speak of one divine οὐσία/φύσις and three hypostases: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet, Cyril in his Second and Third Anathemas used expressions hypostatic/natural (ὑποστατική/φυσική) union for the union of the divine and human natures in Christ. Bearing in mind the history of the term, it was hard for Theodoret to see how Cyril's Christological language was different from that of Apollinarius of Laodicea who used the formula "one physis, one hypostasis, one activity, one prosopon" of the Incarnate Word.<sup>72</sup>

Cyril's use of this Christological discourse opened him up to association with Apollinarianism, not only in the mind of the ancients, but also for some modern theologians who suspected him of heresy as well.<sup>73</sup> Yet, as Theodoret had ascertained a few years after the controversy surrounding the *Anathemas*, Cyril was free from Apollinarianism. Cyril's motivation for using such a controversial terminology was to emphasize the reality of the unity. He thought that by using these formulas he was just continuing the sacred tradition of his church; that he was quoting from his great predecessor Athanasius. In fact, he was quoting from a work that originated in the Apollinarian milieu, which had been misleadingly attributed to Athanasius.<sup>74</sup>

#### 4.11 "Impossible" in the Refutation of Cyril's Twelve Anathemas

Theodoret's Christological system, based on the postulate that the divinity and humanity remained immutable in the union effected by Incarnation, necessitated retention of the unique and absolute properties of the Godhead in the union. Thus, in the *Refutation of the First Anathema* Theodoret says that "the form of God did not change into the form of a servant."<sup>75</sup> Also, the Logos

72 Apollinarius of Laodicea, *De fide et incarnatione* 6: "μία φύσις, μία ὑπόστασις, μία ἐνέργεια, ἓν πρόσωπον" (Critical text in Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule*. 199.).

73 Ibid., 91. See also Adrian Fortescue, "Review of Hans Lietzmann, *Apollinaris of Laodicea and his School*," *The Expository Times* 16, no. 12 (1905): 568.

74 On the origin of quotation see Quasten, *Patrology: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*. 139–40.; Marcel Richard, "L'Introduction du mot "hypostase" dans la théologie de l'incarnation," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 2 (1945): 5–32 and 243–70.; Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great*. 527.

75 Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 173.

“did not become flesh, but assumed living and reasonable flesh, . . . the One being before the ages, being God and with God being together with the Father and known as well as worshipped together with the Father. . . .”<sup>76</sup> For Theodoret, Jesus was primarily God who took on flesh, the form of the servant, human nature in the fullness of its reality, including a rational soul. The presence of Godhead in Jesus is quite real and absolute: “we call him man bearing God, not because he received some share of the divine grace, but as possessing all the Godhead of the Son united” (*Refutation of the Fifth Anathema*).<sup>77</sup>

The full presence of divinity in Jesus compelled Theodoret to insist on the language of impassibility in Christology. The reasoning here was that the reality of the presence of divinity in Jesus would be jeopardized if one ascribed the sufferings (πάθη) of the human nature to Jesus *qua* God-Logos. To Theodoret, Jesus was the Logos incarnate, and one must respect the properties of the unaffected divinity in the union of natures. From the exegetical point of view, all the needs and shortcomings of Jesus’s human nature which were evident in the Scriptures (i.e., hunger and thirst, fatigue and sleep, ignorance and fear, crying and tears, entreaties for salvation before death, etc.) cannot be ascribed to “the Logos, the immortal, the impassible, the bodiless. . . .” (*Refutation of the Tenth Anathema*).<sup>78</sup> All the πάθη of the human nature belong exclusively to the human nature: “it was nature taken from us for our sake which in the trial experienced our sufferings without sin, and not the one who for our salvation had taken it” (*Refutation of the Tenth Anathema*).<sup>79</sup>

The divinity, being united to the humanity, respects the shortcomings of the human nature. Repeating his statement from the *Expositio rectae fidei* 5, Theodoret says that the union of the divine and human natures in Christ was inseparable (*Refutation of the Tenth Anathema*).<sup>80</sup> The logical conclusion drawn from this is that even in the sufferings of Christ’s crucifixion and death, the divinity was present with the humanity. However, it would be impossible for the divine nature to be part of the suffering, since it is impassible by definition. For Theodoret, to say that the divinity in Christ suffered would imply a change in nature, which is a logical impossibility for Godhead. Thus, “it was the nature taken from us for our sake which in the trial experienced our sufferings

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 173–74.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 184. See also the *Refutation of the Fourth Anathema* on p. 177.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

without sin, and not the one who for our salvation had taken it" (*Refutation of the Tenth Anathema*).<sup>81</sup>

#### 4.12 Conclusion

Two early works that contain substantive Christological material, the *Expositio rectae fidei* and the *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas of Cyril of Alexandria*, have been taken as representative works of Theodoret's early Christology. The analysis of the *Expositio* was necessary to provide an insight into Theodoret's Christology before the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy; it is free of polemical intent and charged hostile rhetoric.

From the present analysis of the *Expositio* it is evident that the Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus was deeply rooted in theological tradition established by the preceding generation and endorsed by an authoritative council—the Council of Constantinople of AD 381. Theodoret's terminology faithfully corresponds to that of the great Cappadocians, especially Gregory of Nyssa and Basil of Caesarea. In that sense, Theodoret's method of applying Trinitarian terminology to solve Christological concerns might be characterized as conservative and unimaginative. However, even at this stage his Christology proves to be a worthy product of his admirable erudition.

He did struggle to express his ideas and understanding of Christ, for he was hindered by an inadequate repertoire of lexical tools which included only the Trinitarian concepts of substance/nature and person. Yet his early Christology reflects an extraordinary exegetical genius informed by Christian theology. His synthesis of ancient anthropological models with the Christian Scriptures produced a Christological model which could convincingly stand up to scrutiny from both Christians and pagans alike. If the old axiom that a work reveals much about its author is true, then one ought to conclude that this feature of Theodoret's argument in the *Expositio* is likely to reflect close dialogical proximity to pagan philosophy, perhaps during his formative years near Apamea, where Iamblichus had established his school.

Although the *Expositio* was written early in Theodoret's career, it nonetheless exhibits an advanced Christological teaching. As has been demonstrated, his Christology was shaped by his understanding of the economy of salvation, i.e., reconciliation of the human race to God wrought by the Incarnation of the Logos as the means for expiation of the Protoplast's transgression.

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81 Ibid.

Theodoret conceived of the Incarnation as a union without confusion of the divine and human natures in Christ. The two natures that come together in the Incarnation belong to different orders of existence: the divine nature is uncreated, while the human is created. They could not be united on the level of substance or nature, and therefore in the union both continue to exist. Thus the union was without confusion, i.e., an unmixed union.

Despite insisting on the duality of natures, Theodoret still affirmed that there was a single subject of the Incarnation—the Logos. It is the person of the Logos who enters into the womb of the Blessed Virgin as a seed and creates the entire human nature, part by part, as a temple for indwelling. Once the Logos had created the body, the human nature was supplemented with a soul endowed with reason. This is the only viable mode of union, since the Logos, being God, is immutable, not susceptible to change, while any union by addition to the Logos would imply imperfection on his part, making him automatically less than God. Thus, according to Theodoret, the Logos created the human nature of Jesus and was organically united with it. The human nature retained all of its properties (e.g., need for nourishment, sleep, crying, etc.) in the union, which leads to the conclusion that the natures in the union remain immutable. However, as shown, Theodoret concedes that Christ's Resurrection marks a turning point in Christology: from that point on Jesus's human nature received certain attributes of the divine nature (e.g., immortality, not limited by matter, etc.).

The same Christological concerns are evident at the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy. As has been shown in the analysis of Theodoret's *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas of Cyril of Alexandria*, his predominant Christological principles there, as in the *Expositio*, were the immutability of the divine nature in the union, the unmixed character of the union in which both natures are present, and the notion that in the union the Logos remains impassible God. For Theodoret, these characteristics were the *sine qua non* of Christology, needed to avoid the pitfalls of Arian/Eunomian and Apollinarian teachings.

As shall become evident in the analysis which follows of Theodoret's Christology at the dawn of the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451, his theological concerns and teachings remained unchanged. However, years of fierce theological debates with Cyril of Alexandria and his followers had at least one notable outcome: the forging of a new theological vocabulary. Theodoret took full advantage of the new lexical tools available to him and in his *Eranistes* he rephrased his existing Christology adding new terms.

**PART 3**

*Theodoret's Mature Christology*







## *Eranistes*

The *Eranistes* or *Polymorphus* is the most substantial record of the mature Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus.<sup>1</sup> The work was written after the death of Cyril of Alexandria and some seventeen years after the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy which commanded so much of Theodoret's attention. The intense debates with Cyril and his followers left an indelible mark on Theodoret's Christological thought. M. Richard argued that Theodoret's theological language changed substantially as a result of them.<sup>2</sup> However, here it shall be argued that the change would be better described as the inclusion of new terms into his existing theological lexicon in order to answer the complex Christological concepts that the debate engendered. As shall become evident, Theodoret had not substituted either his Christological ideas or his original theological lexicon for new ones as a result of the debates; he had simply included new terms in addition to the existing ones in order to offer a fuller explanation of his doctrines.

As has been shown in the previous section, Theodoret appropriated and strictly adhered to the traditional theological lexicon of the great Cappadocian brothers. On the one hand, this observance of tradition contributed to his integrity and impact, especially bearing in mind the fact that in the debate

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1 The Greek word ἐρανιστής and its verb form ἐρανίζω have connotation of eclectic contribution or borrowing. Ettlinger argued that although the noun which Theodoret used as the name for this work is often translated as "beggar," the word "collector" would be a more suitable translation, as it would better render the original intention of the author. Theodoret says that the likeminded of "eranistes" "gather together (ἐρανισάμενοι) various opinions and weave them together into a many-faceted theory, just as one might sew scraps of old cloth together" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 61.21–62.7; Cf. also 5.). If the recent treatments of the *Eranistes* by F. Young and P. Clayton are indicators to go by, Ettlinger's translation has become the academic consensus. Yet, as previously mentioned, it seems that Theodoret's intention of criticizing the theological eclecticism of the "eranistes" would be better served by the title "beggar," due to its pejorative connotation. Cf. Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*. 333.; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 216.

2 Richard, "Notes sur l'évolution doctrinale de Théodoret," 459.

with Cyril of Alexandria patristic florilegia played an important role.<sup>3</sup> Patristic citations were introduced in support of one's argument. Theodoret's use of the traditional lexicon, which had been sanctioned by the Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, AD 381), only helped his cause. On the other hand, his adherence to tradition crippled the clarity of his discourse and, by implication, the impact of his teaching.

In the following analysis of the *Eranistes*, which arguably is the embodiment of Theodoret's mature Christology, I shall argue that the change in terminology served only to more fully articulate and clarify Christological teaching, which remained essentially the same as his original position evident before the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy in the *Expositio rectae fidei*. Theodoret himself vehemently asserted this continuity numerous times shortly after the composition of the *Eranistes* (cf. *Epp.* 83, 113, 116). Here I argue that he was justified in doing so.

### 5.1 The Date and Context of the *Eranistes*

Current academic consensus places the composition of the *Eranistes* in the year AD 447, shortly before the outbreak of the Eutychian controversy.<sup>4</sup> The only dissenting voice is that of G. Bardy, who proposed that the *Eranistes* was composed in the year AD 448.<sup>5</sup> Bardy's suggestion has been reluctantly accepted by P. Clayton, who argued that the *Eranistes* was indeed composed ca. AD 447, but he allows for the possibility that it was completed in the

3 F. Young notes that the use of patristic florilegia developed during the Christological controversies of the fifth century. Cyril of Alexandria used patristic quotations in support of his teachings and Theodoret retaliated. Cf. Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*. 334.

4 Louis Saltet, "Les sources de l'Ἐρανιστής de Théodoret," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 6, no. 2 (1905): 290.; Venables, "Theodoretus, Bishop of Cyrrhus," 913.; Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*. 229–30.; Richard, "L'Activité littéraire de Theodoret avant le concile d'Éphèse," 86.; Richard, "Notes sur l'évolution doctrinale de Théodoret," 470.; Martin F.A. Brok, "Touchant la date du commentaire sur le Psautier de Théodoret de Cyr," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 44 (1949): 553.; Quasten, *Patrology: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*. 547.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 3.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes (English edition)*, ed. T.P. et al. Halton, trans. Gerard H. Ettlinger, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 106 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003). 2.

5 Bardy, "Théodoret," xv:306.

year 448.<sup>6</sup> However, Bardy's statement has not been sufficiently substantiated and, not surprisingly, it has not acquired a wider following.

The identification of Theodoret's opponent in the *Eranistes* is a highly contentious point. The identification of the antihero with Eutyches, a Constantinopolitan archimandrite associated with the outbreak of the Miaphysite controversy, used to dominate the scholarship on the *Eranistes*.<sup>7</sup> Yet such identification is hardly convincing when one bears in mind that Eutyches was a charismatic recluse who exerted his authority only via his all-powerful god-child, the great chamberlain Chrysaphius. A mere work of theological writing, such as the *Eranistes*, would hardly suffice to put a stop to such a dynamic. There is no evidence that Eutyches enjoyed any substantial influence in the Church in terms of authoritative theological erudition. Thus, it seems that his Christology would hardly merit an extensive repudiation in writing by Theodoret.

J. Stewardson argued that the only other contemporary of Eutyches who could be a rival candidate was Dioscorus of Alexandria, but he dismissed this possibility as being excessively dangerous politically even for Theodoret.<sup>8</sup> Yet dangerous opposition to theological inadequacies and ecclesial disorder, regardless of their originator, marked Theodoret's entire theological career. One has in mind his long opposition to a myriad of powerful men: Emperor Theodosius and a wide spectrum of his strongmen, and both Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch. Furthermore, he remained constant in his support for and contacts with the anathematized Nestorius, whom he believed innocent. Moreover, Theodoret's response to threats of deposition both in the Nestorian controversy and during his imprisonment in AD 448 attest to his remarkable courage and to a character impervious to fear.<sup>9</sup> Thus, Dioscorus is indeed a candidate for the role of the notorious "Eranistes."

6 Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 215.

7 T. Camelot, "De Nestorius à Eutychès: L'Opposition de deux christologies," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Alois Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1951), 235–36; Bardy, "Théodoret," col. 306.; Devreese, *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*. 167.; Marcel Richard, "Un Écrit de Théodoret sur l'Unité du Christ après l'Incarnation," *Revue d'sciences religieuses* 14 (1934): 33.; Richard, "L'Introduction du mot "hypostase" dans la théologie de l'incarnation," 263.; Venables, "Theodoretus, Bishop of Cyrrhus," 917.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 4.

8 Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 236.

9 Cf. Mansi v, 925, c. 146; Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church*. 151. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Ep. 82* (Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance: Epist. Sirm. 1–95*. 198–205 and *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 5:277–278).

Another possibility is that Theodoret had in mind the entire “school” of Cyril when he wrote the *Eranistes*. This idea was proposed most clearly by Stewardson in his regrettably unpublished dissertation.<sup>10</sup> P. Clayton has embraced this suggestion in the most recent monograph on Theodoret’s Christology.<sup>11</sup>

Since Theodoret himself did not reveal the identity of his fictionalized opponent in the *Eranistes*, a definitive identification by modern scholars is of course more or less impossible. However, there is a strong case for supposing that it was Cyril of Alexandria he had in mind. This idea originated in C. de Mazzarino’s convincing analysis of Theodoret’s opposition to Cyril.<sup>12</sup> Mazzarino pointed out that Theodoret’s argumentation, outline, and presuppositions in the *Eranistes* are very similar to those in the *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas*. Theodoret’s concern in the *Refutation* was that Cyril’s Christological language jeopardized the immutability of the Logos. The subject of attribution of Christ’s human characteristics and the problem of Jesus’s suffering is prominent in both the *Eranistes* and the *Refutation* alike. Suspicion of Apollinarianism lurks in the background in both works.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Mazzarino argued that certain phrases also hint of the identity of the antihero Eranistes. Cyril argued that John 1:14 (ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο) should not be understood in terms of indwelling, but in terms of “becoming flesh.” When he was pressed to explain how he could reconcile his suggestion that the Logos could become flesh with the teaching that the divine nature was immutable, he invoked mystery. Eranistes likewise argues that the mode of Incarnation remains a mystery.<sup>14</sup> The opponent’s part in the *Eranistes* is also replete with the Cyrilline phrases such as “one nature” (μία φύσις) and “from two natures” (ἐκ δύο φύσεων) and yet not once is it argued

10 Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*”, 232–43.

11 Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*, 217.

12 Mazzarino, *La dottrina di Teodoreto di Ciro sull’unione ipostatica delle due nature in Cristo*, 133–34. Cf. also Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*”, 237–39.

13 Mazzarino, *La dottrina di Teodoreto di Ciro sull’unione ipostatica delle due nature in Cristo*, 134. See also Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*”, 237–38.

14 Mazzarino, *La dottrina di Teodoreto di Ciro sull’unione ipostatica delle due nature in Cristo*, 135. J. Stewardson argued that the parallel between Cyril and Eranistes is even more striking in the recourse to mystery in *Eranistes* 37A–B (Stewardson, “The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*”, 238–47, n. 47.).

that Christ was solely divine, which is highly reminiscent of Cyril's debates with Nestorius.<sup>15</sup>

Mazzarino's proposal is a very attractive option. In support of his theory, it must be pointed out that the florilegia of the *Eranistes* are essentially adaptations of an extensive anthology of patristic quotations.<sup>16</sup> E. Schwartz, M. Richard, and J. Quasten have argued that the Antiochene party intended to use the original collection against Cyril of Alexandria during the Council of Ephesus in AD 431.<sup>17</sup> However, Ettlinger rightly pointed out that the existence

15 Mazzarino, *La dottrina di Teodoreto di Ciro sull'unione ipostatica delle due nature in Cristo*. 136. Stewardson noted that Mazzarino must have had Cyril's overall argument in mind here, including his *Defense of the Twelve Anathemas*. However, Eranistes clearly states that in Christ there was only "one nature after the union" (Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 247.). Just like with Cyril, Mazzarino most likely had in mind the overall argument of Eranistes, which does not entirely do away with the humanity of Christ.

16 While Theodoret's authorship of the core of the florilegia is beyond doubt, it has been noted that they underwent a later revision. The presence of passages from the *Tome of Leo* necessitates this conclusion. Saltet argued that Theodoret himself did the revision (Saltet, "Les sources de l'Ἐρηνιστής de Théodoret," 290.). He has been followed in this by many others (e.g., Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*. 230.; Emonds, *Zweite Auflage im Altertum. Kulturgeschichtliche Studien zur Überlieferung der antiker Literatur*. 378.; cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 29.). However, V. Bolotov argued that Theodoret did not revise the *Eranistes* himself, but the revision was in fact an extensive interpolation by a native speaker of Greek. Besides the obvious interpolation of citations of Leo's *Tome*, it appears that the citations from Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom are in fact not the original text but retranslations from Latin. Moreover, the presence of citations from Ambrose of Milan distorts the chronological order of the citations (especially those of Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom). Ettlinger further expanded this argument by adding that the florilegia were expanded by a copyist sometime after the Council of Chalcedon. Cf. Vasilii Bolotov, "Theodoretiana: Otzyv' ob' udostoennom' Sv. Sinodom" polnoi premii mitropolita Makarii v' 1892g. sochinenii N.N. Glubokovskago: "Blazhennyi Theodoret, Ego zhizn' i literaturnaia deiatel'nost'." St Petersburg: Tipografiia A. Katanskago i ko., 1892: 142–47 (Болотовъ, *Theodoretiana: Отзивъ объ удостоенномъ Св. Синодомъ полной преміи митрополита Макарія въ 1892 г. сочиненіи Н. Н. Глубоковскаго: "Блаженный Ѳеодоритъ, Его жизнь и литературная дѣятельность*. 142–47.); Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 29–30.

17 Eduard Schwartz, *Publizistische Sammlungen zum acacianischen Schisma*, Abhandlungen der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-(philol.) und hist. Klasse, N.F. Heft 10 (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Kommission bei der C.H. Beck'schen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1934). 282, n. 2.; Marcel Richard, "Les florilèges dyphistes du Ve et du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Alois Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1959), 723–28;

of such a florilegium, in a fully developed form, is uncertain and such an argument cannot be substantiated by the material currently available. Even if the florilegia come from an Antiochene collection, Theodoret must have been instrumental in its composition. Ettlinger proposed an alternative theory: namely, that the florilegia were based on the collections of patristic sayings from the *Pentalogos*, which Theodoret composed against Cyril in AD 432.<sup>18</sup> Either way, it is important to note that the florilegia of the *Eranistes* are closely connected to the disputations with Cyril of Alexandria, which fact indicates that Cyril's Christological teaching was the target of Theodoret's work.

One of the difficulties with this theory is that in the *Eranistes* Cyril of Alexandria is quoted in support of Theodoret's Christology. Thus, he appears to function as an authority. Mazzarino's answer is that the quotation served as a *captatio benevolentiae* directed toward the Cyrilline party.<sup>19</sup> He was essentially correct, though this is not the only explanation for the appeal to Cyril's authority. In arguing his points in the *Eranistes*, Theodoret introduced the novel practice of appealing even to condemned heretics such as Apollinarius. The purpose of these quotations was to show that certain consequences of the opponent's doctrines would be so absurd that even their heretical originator (viz. Apollinarius) shunned them. The patristic florilegia are ordered chronologically, while Apollinarius is cited at the end. Now, the quotations from Cyril appear only in the florilegium of the *Second Dialogue*. It is noteworthy, however, that when Cyril's uncle and predecessor Theophilus of Alexandria is quoted, quotations from Cyril do not follow his; rather, they are placed right before those attributed to Apollinarius at the end of the florilegium. Thus, the quotations from Cyril in the *Eranistes* may also serve as an indirect and subtle criticism of his person rather than as an invocation of positive authority. This would be in line with Theodoret's original attitude towards Cyril's Christology as evidenced in the *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas*, which, as indicated in the analysis in Part II, involved a charge of logical inconsistency and theological incompetence.

Stewardson, however, has argued that it is unlikely that Cyril was the object of criticism in the *Eranistes* because he had been dead for several years when

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Quasten, *Patrology: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*. 547.; Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Eranistes*. 28.

18 Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Eranistes*. 28, 30. Guinot gives AD 431 as an alternative date for the composition of the *Pentalogos*. See Guinot, "Un nouveau fragment grec du Pentalogos de Théodoret de Cyr," 319.

19 Mazzarino, *La dottrina di Teodoreto di Ciro sull'unione ipostatica delle due nature in Cristo*. 133–34.

the work was composed; he believed that Theodoret's opponent must have been a contemporary ecclesial personage.<sup>20</sup> One must not forget that criticizing the theology of deceased authorities would not be a novelty. Cyril himself used the strategy in his attacks on Theodore of Mopsuestia, whom, incidentally, Theodoret held in high esteem. Theodore enjoyed an unprecedented theological authority in the Antiochene milieu which rendered him impervious to open attacks while he was still alive. Some two decades later, Theodoret in all likelihood used the same technique against Cyril, who had appeared equally unassailable after his political victory at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431. Only his death provided the opportunity to begin a campaign to repair the damage inflicted upon the Antiochenes. The tremendous political power that the Cyrilline party wielded prevented Theodoret from openly attacking the late Cyril and obliged him to hide the true identity of the object of criticism in the *Eranistes* behind a pseudonym.

The *Eranistes* is not a direct attack on Cyril; its purpose was rather to show the process of change in Cyril's Christology through time. It functions as Theodoret's account of the Nestorian controversy and its Christological developments. Naturally, the argument is that it was Cyril, and not he, Theodoret, who came to know truth through their debates. Theodoret functions as a teacher and corrector of the original inadequacy of Cyril's Christological language. As was evident from the discussion of the historical background, he had ample reason for believing this. Cyril's abandonment of the radical language of the *Twelve Anathemas* and his subscription to the *Tomos of Reunion*, in both of which the hand of Theodoret was evident, are very reminiscent of the dialogical process in which *Eranistes* is corrected by the competent explanations of Orthodoxos. Thus, the pseudonymous attack of the *Eranistes* is posthumously directed against the Christological teaching of Cyril of Alexandria in order to undermine the very foundation of the Ephesine party, with the purpose of restoring the prestige of the Antiochene party.<sup>21</sup>

20 Stewardson, "The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to His *Eranistes*", 239–40.

21 It ought to be mentioned here that in this sense the *Eranistes* is a supplement to Theodoret's historical work. The *Eranistes* predates the *Ecclesiastical History* by a couple of years. The latter ends with the death of Theodore of Mopsuestia in the year AD 428. However, the *Eranistes*, although written in a cryptic manner, provides an account of the history of Christological debates in the Nestorian controversy, albeit through purely theological argumentation.



## 5.2 The Content of the *Eranistes*

The *Eranistes* is written in the form of a dialogue between Orthodoxos and Eranistes.<sup>22</sup> The identity of neither character is specified in the text. However, it is clear that Orthodoxos represents the orthodox theology of Theodoret, while Eranistes collects Christological opinions from various sources, which Theodoret considered heretical—not traditional, and incoherent.<sup>23</sup>

The main body of the work is laid out in three parts. Dialogue I (ἄτρεπτος) deals with the immutability of the Logos in the Incarnation. Dialogue II (ἀσύγχυτος) is a debate about the manner of union of the two natures in which it is argued that the divine and human natures in Christ were not commingled, but continue to exist even after the union. Dialogue III (ἀπαθής) treats the impassibility of the Logos in the union effected in the Incarnation.

### 5.2.1 Introduction

The dialogues are preceded by a short introduction in which Theodoret pronounces the main intention of the *Eranistes* to be the refutation of the teachings of those heretics who deny Christ's divinity and also of those who deny

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22 As Theodoret himself admits, the dialogue form used in the *Eranistes* employs a rather different method from that used by the authors of classical dialogues. Theodoret's concern was to make the dialogues reader-friendly not by incorporating the names of the participants into the text, but by placing them in the margins in order to make the argument "more intelligible and profitable for readers unacquainted with verbal disputation" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 29. Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 5. N.G. Wilson and G. Ettlinger consider this a revolutionary innovation which gave new direction to an ancient literary form: N.G. Wilson, "Indications of Speaker in Greek Dialogue Texts," *The Classical Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (1970): 305. Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 5. Recently, R. Lim has argued that the inclusion of the names of speakers in the dialogue is not an innovation by Theodoret. The same is attested in a copy of a stenographically recorded dialogue between Origen and Heraclides and certain bishops (Ὡριγένεους διάλεκτοι πρὸς Ἡρακλείδην καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ ἐπισκόπους) found in the Toura papyrus (c. AD 300, Cairo, Egypt). Also, manuscripts of the anonymous *De recta in Deum fide* (third century AD), written in a dialectic form, include the abbreviated names of the seven protagonists. However, Lim acknowledges Theodoret's originality in placing the names of the participants in dialogues outside of the body of the text, in the margins, making the text more approachable for the readers. Cf. Richard Lim, "Theodoret of Cyrus and the Speakers in Greek Dialogues," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 111 (1991): 181–82.

23 Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 5.; Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*. 333.

his humanity.<sup>24</sup> Thus, from the outset, the overall argument of the *Eranistes* is laid out as proof of the reality of the existence of both the divine and human natures in Christ.

It ought to be mentioned, however, that in the introduction the emphasis is put on teachings from prior generations that challenged the fullness of Christ's humanity, while the reality of divinity receives less attention. Theodoret associates a number of notorious teachings with the Christology of Eranistes. Since he does not explain why he associates the teaching of Eranistes with condemned heretics, one concludes that in making these connections he drew upon common knowledge and popular perception.

Theodoret refers to Simon Magus, Cerdo, and Marcion as paradigms for the teaching that Christ was only God.<sup>25</sup> He argues that this belief negates the active participation of the Virgin Mary in the Incarnation, which teaching is then associated with Valentinus and Bardesanes.<sup>26</sup> Also, Theodoret argues that Apollinarius of Laodicea made a contribution to Eranistes's Christology

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24 Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 5.; Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)*. 216.

25 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 28. Theodoret discusses all three teachings in the *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* (hereafter HFC). The life and teaching of Simon Magus are refuted in HFC 1.1 (cf. PG 83. 341–46), while the teachings of Cerdo and Marcion, teacher and disciple respectively, are considered together in HFC 1.24 (PG 83.371–6). However, the only discussion of Christological material in the above-mentioned passages is to be found in Theodoret's treatment of Marcion. Marcion is presented as believing that Christ was god who came down to save those who believed in him and that during his mission on earth he only “appeared to be human, though having nothing human, and appeared to suffer whilst not suffering at all” (ET from Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 204.) No similar references are found in Theodoret's treatment of the teachings of Simon Magus and Cerdo. The connection is probably inferred from their association with Marcion; namely, Theodoret holds that Simon Magus was a predecessor of the teaching of Cerdo, who in turn was the master of Marcion (Cf. HFC 1.24 in PG 83. 372).

26 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 28 (English edition). According to Theodoret, Valentinus (HFC 1.7 in PG 83. 353–58) believed that Christ was an emanation of the Father who in his physical form was clothed with a body created by the evil Demiurge, and yet he “did not assume anything material whatsoever, since nothing of what belongs to matter can receive salvation” (ET from Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 202.). Theodoret presented Bardesanes's teaching (HFC 1.22 in PG 83. 372) as an offshoot of Valentinus's system, implying that he shared his teacher's view of the Incarnation. However, the short account of his teaching in the *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* does not specify his “errors.”

with his view that the union of divinity and humanity in Christ resulted in one nature.<sup>27</sup> Regarding the challenge to the fullness of Christ's divinity, Theodoret briefly mentioned that the teaching of Eranistes, like that of Arius and Eunomius, effectively robs Christ of his divinity by attributing passion to his divine nature.<sup>28</sup> This perceived eclecticism, which sets the tone for the entire work, was the main reason for the choice of pejorative title through which Theodoret leaves no doubt as to sentiments towards his opponent's Christology.

The polemical tone of the *Eranistes* is reminiscent, however, of an earlier Christological work of Theodoret—*The Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas of Cyril of Alexandria*. The two works are different in their literary style: while the *Refutation* is written as a prose text, the format of the *Eranistes* is dialogical. Yet both works exhibit a mild-tempered polemical tone. In both works Theodoret functions more as a good teacher than as a heresy hunter. This disposition becomes especially evident in the dialogues of the *Eranistes*. While Orthodoxos refutes the “false teachings” of Eranistes, his purpose is correction through demonstration of their inadequacy in view both of the Scriptural evidence and of the orthodox *kerygma* as proclaimed in the writings of authoritative Church Fathers.

### 5.2.2 *Dialogue 1—“Immutable” (ἄτρεπτος)*

The main part of the work opens with an exegesis of John 1:14 in a dialogical form. The purpose of the first dialogue is to prove that in the union of the divine and human natures, the divine nature of the Logos remained immutable. The principle of the immutability of the Logos functions as a framework for the dialogues of the *Eranistes*, for the descriptions of the Incarnation as “unmixed” (ἀσύγχυτος) in Dialogue II and “impassible” (ἀπαθής) in Dialogue III are based on the assumption that in the Incarnation Christ remained true God while becoming a true human being (ἄνθρωπος).

27 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 28. Cf. HFC 4.8 in PG 83. 425–28 (ET in Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 219.).

28 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 28. In HFC 4.1, Theodoret says that Arius asserted that in the Incarnation the Logos “took a soulless body and that the divine being carried out [the functions] of the soul, so that to this [i.e., to the Godhead] he [Arius] attached the experiences arising from the body” (ET from Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 214.). The account of Eunomius's teaching in the HFC 4.3 does not yield much useful information on his Christology, apart from the assertion that he was a follower of Arius (ET in *ibid.*, 216–18.).

The proclamation in John's Gospel that "the Logos became flesh" (ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο) appears to be open to the interpretation that the Logos through Incarnation underwent a certain change into flesh. In the *Eranistes* Theodoret reveals his sentiments through the vehement opposition of Orthodoxos to such an interpretation. The entire Dialogue 1 is dedicated to proving to Eranistes, through both Biblical and patristic quotations, that the Incarnation does not involve change in the Logos *qua* God.

In the debate, Eranistes is presented as an obstinate fundamentalist who seeks refuge in theological abstractions and mysteries.<sup>29</sup> He agrees with Orthodoxos that immutability is one of the characteristics of divinity, and yet he insists that the Logos became flesh. Orthodoxos argues, however, that the only acceptable interpretation of John 1:14 would be in view of Heb 1:16, which he interprets as meaning that the Logos "took hold of the seed of Abraham" (i.e., a human being).<sup>30</sup> Throughout the first Dialogue it is argued that Jesus was "not only God, but also a human being."<sup>31</sup> Had the Logos not become a human being (ἄνθρωπος) in the Incarnation, then he could not have been seen either by angels or humans (cf. 1 Tim 6:16 and 1 Tim 3:16).<sup>32</sup> Orthodoxos draws the conclusion that Christ must have been God and a human being (ἄνθρωπος) at the same time. What was visible was not the divine nature of the Logos, but "the true and living cloak of flesh as though it were a veil."<sup>33</sup> Based on Heb 10:5 ("... a body hast thou prepared for me"), Orthodoxos concludes that John 1:14 refers to the Incarnation of the Logos not in terms of change (μεταβολή) of the divine nature, but in terms of the Logos taking possession of a body formed (διάπλασις) for him.<sup>34</sup> Christ was truly God, but because of the human nature which he assumed, he was perceived as a man.<sup>35</sup>

29 Cf. Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*, 334.

30 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.41: "... σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ ἐπιλαμβανόμενον" (Theodoret of Cyrhus, *Eranistes*, 69.).

31 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.47: "... οὐ θεὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄνθρωπον" (ibid., 72.).

32 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.50–1 (ibid., 74–75.).

33 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.52: "ἀληθεῖ καὶ ζῶντι χρῆσάμενος, οἷόν τι παραπετάσματι, τῷ τῆς σαρκὸς προκαλύμματι" (ibid., 76.).

34 Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.57–59: "Διὸ εἰσερχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον λέγει θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἡθέλησας, σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι. 'Οὐκ εἶπεν, εἰς σῶμα με μεταβέβληκας, ἀλλὰ, 'σῶμα κατηρτίσω μοι.' Δηλοῖ δὲ τὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ σώματος γεγεννημένην διάπλασιν..." (ibid., 80.).

35 Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.75: "Θεὸς γὰρ ὧν ἐδόκει ἄνθρωπος εἶναι δι' ἣν ἀνείλφη φύσιν" (ibid., 91.).

The Dialogue is followed by a florilegium consisting of two thematic parts. The first part is shorter and contains seven patristic passages explaining John 1:14 in line with the argument of the previous debate:<sup>36</sup>

1. Athanasius, *Ad Epictetum* 8 (PG 26.1061D–1064A)
2. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistula* 101—*Ad Cledonium* (PG 37.189C)
3. Ambrose, *De incarnationis dominicae sacramento* 6.59, 60, 61 (CSEL LXXIX, 254.122–6, 255.139–44, 256.147–50)
4. Flavian of Antioch, *In Ioannem* 1:14 (Cavallera frag. 4, p. 106)
5. Gelasius of Caesarea, *In Epiphaniam* (Diekamp, frag. XI, p. 47)
6. John Chrysostom, *In Ioannem homilia* XI, 1–2 (PG 59.79)
7. Severian of Gabala, *De sigilis* (PG 63.542)

The second part of the florilegium contains sixty passages from eleven authoritative Church Fathers, cited in chronological order, beginning with Ignatius of Antioch and ending with another Antiochene, John Chrysostom. The main purpose of these selections is to prove that Jesus Christ was the Logos-incarnate, i.e., true God and a true human being, and that in the Incarnation neither nature underwent substantial change, and Christ exists as God and man at the same time.

It is interesting to note that Theodoret chose not to include quotations from controversial sources. While acknowledging the orthodoxy of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, he still chose not to include quotations from their works, because his opponent (Eranistes) rejects their orthodoxy. Theodoret's sentiments of utmost admiration towards the two are expressed in unmistakable terms: they are called "triumphant fighters of religion," who "expressed the same ideas [as the holy fathers], drew from the divine spring, and were themselves fountains of the Spirit."<sup>37</sup> One must not forget that this brave expression of support of Theodoret for Diodore and Theodore comes in AD 447. It is about a decade after the outbreak of Cyril's open attack on their Christology. As was shown in the historical section of this book, Cyril charged Diodore and Theodore with being fathers and predecessors of the doctrines of Nestorius, i.e., of being his teachers in heresy. Theodoret then responded to these accusations by refuting Cyril. Yet the charge of heresy made by Cyril, who established himself as standard of Christological orthodoxy, remained

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>37</sup> Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.80: "... τῶν νικηφόρων τῆς εὐσεβείας ἀγωνιστῶν Διοδώρου καὶ Θεοδώρου ... ἐκ τῆς θείας πηγῆς ἀρυσασμένους τὰ νόματα, καὶ κρουνοὺς καὶ αὐτοὺς γεγεννημένους τοῦ πνεύματος." (ibid., 95.).

as a stain on the memory of Diodore and Theodore. Nonetheless, as is clear from the *Eranistes*, Theodoret's admiration for the two did not change even in the mature period of his Christological output. Practically at the dawn of the Council of Chalcedon, Theodoret is not ashamed or afraid to make such a public statement saying that he still adheres to the same Christological system of belief.

This is further evident from his choice of patristic quotations in the first florilegium. All the patristic citations are carefully selected to demonstrate that Christ became a true human being (ἄνθρωπος) while remaining God. The quotations from Ignatius's letters affirm that Christ was a "perfect human being" (τοῦ τελείου ἀνθρώπου) and "God in a human being" (ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ θεός).<sup>38</sup> A passage from Eustathius of Antioch conveys the same affirmation that in the Incarnation Christ, who was God by nature, remained what he was, whereas "from a woman was born a human being."<sup>39</sup>

Two more references from Eustathius explain the mode of Incarnation. There he says that the Logos "having created a temple put on the human being."<sup>40</sup> Still another passage from the same author affirms the reality of the existence of a complete human being in the union of the two natures in Christ: "the one who was anointed . . . he was adorned by a chosen temple through the divinity of the one who dwelt in him."<sup>41</sup>

A citation from Athanasius of Alexandria further qualifies the union, explaining that the assumed humanity was not consubstantial with the Logos *qua* God. Its substance was humanity, which is evident from the fact that it could suffer. Athanasius is adamant that no Christian would dare to say, "the Logos formed for himself a body that could suffer, not from Mary, but from his own substance."<sup>42</sup> Therefore, as mentioned above, Theodoret is using the axiom of the immutability of the Logos to argue that the human nature of Christ remained intact after the Incarnation. This was necessitated by the fact

38 Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 4.2–5.1 (Funk, I, 278.9–16) and *Letter to the Ephesians* 7.2 (Funk, I, 218.7–20).

39 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.91: "ἐκ γυναικὸς δὲ γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 101.). Cf. ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 74.

40 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.91: "τὸν ἄνθρωπον ναυργήσας ἐφόρεσεν ὁ λόγος" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 101.). Cf. ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 75.

41 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.91: "ὁ δὲ χρισθεὶς ἐπίκτητον εἵληφεν ἀρετὴν, ἐκκρίτῳ ναυργίᾳ κοσμηθεὶς, ἐκ τῆς τοῦ κατοικοῦντος ἐν αὐτῷ θεότητος" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 101.). Cf. ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 75.

42 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.93: "Τίς δὲ ἀκούων ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ Μαρίας ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ οὐσίας μετεποίησεν ἑαυτῷ σῶμα παθητὸν ὁ λόγος, εἴποι ἂν Χριστιανὸν τὸν λέγοντα ταῦτα" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 103.). Cf. ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 77.

that, as the Scriptural evidence shows, Christ suffered from the involuntary passions of human nature (death, hunger, thirst, fatigue, etc.). These cannot be associated with the Logos *qua* God. Besides the obvious purpose of showing to the opponent (Eranistes) that one of his paramount authorities argues that the Logos *qua* God is different from the humanity and that the union of the natures in Christ does not imply their commingling, the citation from Athanasius also serves as a masterly and subtle introduction of Theodoret's final point in the discussion about the union of natures—impassibility.

In support of the immutability of the Logos in the Incarnation, besides the citations from Athanasius, Theodoret used passages from six fathers of the Antiochene milieu: Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Flavian of Antioch, Amphilochius of Iconium, and John Chrysostom.

The citation from the *Letter to Cledonius* (Letter 101) by Gregory of Nazianzus invites further analysis. As G. Ettlinger's translation of the *Eranistes* suggests, the first citation from Gregory's *Letter to Cledonius* appears to be saying that commingling was the mode of union of the natures in Christ: "...just as the names were mixed together, so too were the natures."<sup>43</sup> This would certainly be a very uncharacteristic choice of words for Theodoret, for his purpose if the entire *Eranistes*, and especially in Dialogue I, was to argue for the exact opposite, for the distinction of the natures. This seeming disparity could be explained as an interpolation into the florilegium, as Bolotov and Ettlinger have suggested.<sup>44</sup>

Nonetheless, the second citation from the same work sheds light on Theodoret's interpretation of Gregory's conception of the union. There it is said that the Logos "in the flesh as though in a veil converses (προσομιλήσῃ) with humans."<sup>45</sup> This description of the union is more in line with Theodoret's argument in the *Eranistes*, and since it hails from the same work, it serves to elucidate the previous citation.

The expression that Gregory used to describe the "mixture" of natures in the first passage is *κίρναμένων*. This term often signifies a mixture of two entities

43 Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.96: "κίρναμένων ὥσπερ τῶν κλήσεων, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τῶν φύσεων" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 104.).

44 Болотовъ, *Theodoretiana: Отзивъ объ удостоенномъ Св. Синодомъ полной преміи митрополита Макарія въ 1892 г. сочиненіи Н. Н. Глубоковскаго: "Блаженный Θεόδωρος, Его жизнь и литературная дѣятельность.* 142–47.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 29–30.

45 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.96: "ὥς ὑπὸ παραπετάσματι τῇ σαρκὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις προσομιλήσῃ" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 104.). Cf. ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 79.



in which they fully permeate each other (e.g., this term would be used to describe the mixture of water and wine).<sup>46</sup> However, by the end of the fourth century, the term acquired the meaning of “spiritual union” in patristic writings. It was used in this sense in the second *Homily on Pascha* attributed to John Chrysostom. There the term “κιννάμενοι” describes the spiritual union of the faithful with Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, Nemesisius of Emessa also used the term to describe the union of the natures in Christ, while at the same time he expressly affirmed that in the union the Logos remains “unmixed, uncompounded, uncontaminated, and immutable.”<sup>48</sup> Therefore, in view of the meaning of κιννάμενων at the time of composition of the *Letter to Cledonius*, the somewhat ambiguous terminology, when read in light of the second passage from the same work conveniently quoted by Theodoret, leaves no doubt that the intention of the citation is to argue for the distinctiveness of the natures united in Christ. Therefore, Ettlinger’s translation would do more justice to Theodoret’s intention in the *Eranistes* if it employed a more theologically neutral term, e.g., “union.” It also ought to be mentioned that the ambiguity of the first passage from Gregory further suggests a certain astuteness on Theodoret’s behalf. By subtly introducing the passage in this context, he anticipated and elegantly prevented the objections of critics who might have used Gregory’s passage in their refutations.

46 Cf. Origen, *Hom. in Jer.* 12.1 (PG 13, 377D) and 12.2 (PG 13, 381A). Cf. also Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. 755.

47 Ps.-John Chrysostom, *In sanctum pascha* (sermo 2) 18: “οἱ μὴ παρέχοντες ἐπιτήδειον τὸ σῶμα πρὸς τὴν ἀνάκρασιν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὅπερ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν ἵνα πρὸς αὐτὸ κιννάμενοι πρὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἀνακινώμεθα” (PG 8, 256B; see also Origène, *Homélies pascales: Trois homélies dans la tradition*, ed. Pierre Nautin, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes 36 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1953). 91.).

48 Nemesisius of Emessa, *On the Nature of Man* 3, 14–15: “But God the Word [i.e., Logos] is not in any way Himself altered by this affinity [to change] that concerns body and soul, nor does He share in their weakness, but by giving them a share in His divinity He becomes one with them while remaining one as He was before the unification. This kind of unification is novel. He both is infused and remains altogether unmixed, uncompounded, uncontaminated, and unchanged, not affected with them but only acting with them. . . .” (Nemesisius of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man*. 84.). Cf. “. . . ὁ δὲ θεὸς λόγος οὐδὲν αὐτὸς ἀπὸ τῆς κοινωνίας τῆς περὶ τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀλλοιούμενος οὐδὲ μετέχων τῆς ἐκείνων ἀσθενείας, μεταδιδοὺς δὲ αὐτοῖς τῆς ἑαυτοῦ θεότητος γίνεται σὺν αὐτοῖς ἓν, μένων ἓν, ὅπερ ἦν καὶ πρὸ τῆς ἐνώσεως. καινότερος οὗτος ὁ τρόπος τῆς κράσεως ἢ ἐνώσεως, καὶ κιννάται καὶ μένει παντάπασιν ἄμικτος καὶ ἀσύγχυτος καὶ ἀδιάφθορος καὶ ἀμετάβλητος, οὐ συμπάσχων, ἀλλὰ συμπράττων μόνον. . . .” (Nemesisius of Emesa, *Nemesii Emeseni De natura hominis*, ed. Moreno Morani, Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1987). 42.).



Theodoret strengthened his position by quoting from Gregory of Nyssa's Christological interpretation of Proverbs 9:1 ("the Wisdom has built a temple for itself"). For Gregory, the passage refers to the Incarnation and the Logos is identified as the "wisdom" that built a home for itself (i.e., Christ's human nature) in the Virgin's body.<sup>49</sup> The next passage from the same work by Gregory expounds on Proverbs 8:22 ("the Lord created me...") as a reference to the Incarnation.<sup>50</sup>

Along the same lines, Theodoret chose a few passages from John Chrysostom where it is said that Christ "puts on our weakened nature" (τὴν φύσιν περιβάλλεται τὴν ἡμετέραν, τὴν ἡσθενηκυῖσαν...) <sup>51</sup> and "put on flesh" (τὸ σάρκα αὐτὸν περιβεβλήσθαι).<sup>52</sup> Special attention is paid to passages that affirm the notion that the Logos formed a human nature for himself. Two separate citations from Chrysostom's *Homily on Nativity* emphasize this concept: "God [Logos]...formed for himself a living temple...", repeated as "We say that God the Word [i.e., Logos] formed for himself a holy temple and through it brought the heavenly way of life unto our life."<sup>53</sup> Further, Theodoret quotes from Chrysostom the passage affirming that "... Christ assumed from the virgin's womb flesh that was pure, holy, unblemished, and free of all sin, and formed his own vessel."<sup>54</sup>

Finally, Theodoret completed the florilegium of Dialogue 1 by providing citations from Apollinarius. This innovative manner of argumentation—employing useful quotations even from anti-heroes—served the purpose

49 *Contra Eunomium* 3.1.44. Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes*, 1.97: "φαμέν τοίνυν, ὅτι ἐν μὲν τοῖς πρὸ τούτου λόγοις εἰπὼν τὴν σοφίαν ὠκοδομηκέναι ἐαυτῇ οἶκον, τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς τοῦ κυρίου κατασκευὴν τῷ λόγῳ αἰνίσσεται. Οὐ γὰρ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ οἰκοδομήματι ἡ ἀληθινή σοφία κατῴκησεν, ἀλλ' ἐαυτῇ τὸ οἰκητήριον ἐκ τοῦ παρθενικοῦ σώματος ἐδομήσατο" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 106.; ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 81.).

50 *Contra Eunomium* 3.1.50 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 106.; ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 82.).

51 *Homily* [9] delivered after the Gothic elder 3. Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes*, 1.100 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 108.; ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 84.).

52 *Homily* [7] on the incomprehensible nature of God 3. Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes*, 1.101 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 108.; ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 85.).

53 John Chrysostom, *On the nativity* 6. Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.101 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 108.; ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 84–85.).

54 John Chrysostom, *On the nativity* 6. Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.101: "Ἐκεῖνο δὲ φαμεν, ὅτι καθαρὰν σάρκα καὶ ἁγίαν καὶ ἄμωμον καὶ ἁμαρτίᾳ πάσῃ γενομένην ἄβρατον ἐκ παρθενικῆς μητρός ἀνέλαβεν ὁ Χριστός, καὶ τὸ οἰκεῖον διώρθωσε σκευὸς" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 108.; ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 84–85.).

of sealing the argument. Theodoret himself explained the rationale behind this peculiar and daring experiment. Not even such a notorious heretic as Apollinarius, whom he associates with Eranistes's "heretical teachings," would blaspheme so much as to deny that the Logos remained immutable in the Incarnation: "Apollinarius, the writer of heretical foolishness, also confesses that God the Word is immutable, and he does not say that he changed into flesh, but that he assumed flesh . . . Do not struggle, therefore, to surpass your teacher in blasphemy."<sup>55</sup>

### 5.2.3 *Dialogue II—"Unmixed" (ἀσύγχυτος)*

The second dialogue deals with the mode of union of the natures in Christ. Theodoret's argument throughout the section is that in the Incarnation the divine nature of the Logos was united to the human nature in an unmixed or unconfused manner so as to form Jesus Christ. Thus, there is one person (πρόσωπον) of Christ which subsists in two distinct natures.

The dialogue opens with a reiteration of the conclusion from the previous dialogue: namely, that the Logos remained immutable after taking on a complete human nature, both soul and body. Thus the doctrines of Apollinarius are rejected from the outset.<sup>56</sup> The Incarnation was necessary in order to restore the human race, which followed in the fall of the Protoplast in paradise. In the Incarnation the Logos *qua* God became a human being (ἐνανθρωπήσας). The result was Christ, who was both God and a human being (ἄνθρωπος). Theodoret argues that according to the Gospel evidence the name "Christ" does not apply to the Logos *qua* God (cf. John 1:1–4 and 1:9), but only to the "incarnate Logos," i.e., Logos who took on a human nature (cf. Matthew 1:21 and Luke 2:11).<sup>57</sup>

In the preceding dialogue, Orthodoxos and Eranistes had reached the consensus that the Logos *qua* God is immutable (ἄτρεπτος) by nature. Thus, the union of the Logos with humanity ought to be conceived of as the assumption of human nature (ἄνθρωπιν δὲ φύσιν λαβὼν ἐνῆνθρώπησε).<sup>58</sup> Since the union is real, and in order to avoid heretical confusions, "each nature ought to be

55 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 1.104–5: "Ἀπολινάριος, ὁ τοὺς αἰρετικοὺς φληνάφους συγγράψας, καὶ ἄτρεπτον ὁμολογεῖ τὸν θεὸν λόγον, καὶ οὐκ εἰς σάρκα αὐτὸν τετράφθαι φησὶν, ἀλλὰ σάρκα ἀνείληφέναι . . . Μὴ τοίνυν ἀποκρύψαι τῇ βλασφημίᾳ φιλονεικήσητε τὸν διδάσκαλον" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 110–11; ET in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 87–88.).

56 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.90 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 113.).

57 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.91 (ibid., 114.).

58 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.91 (ibid.)

confessed, the one that assumed and the one that was assumed" (Προσῆκει τοῖνυν ἡμᾶς ἑκατέραν φύσιν ὁμολογεῖν καὶ τὴν λαβοῦσαν καὶ τὴν ληφθεῖσαν).<sup>59</sup> Orthodoxos goes on to assert that Christ's humanity was a prerequisite for salvation; Christ had carried out his salvific work on the cross by virtue of his human nature, since the divine nature is impassible by definition. Thus it is necessary to acknowledge Christ's full humanity in order to confess the efficacy and success of his salvific work: "keeping silent about it [humanity] denies the nature; denying the [human] nature does away with the sufferings; and doing away with the sufferings destroys salvation."<sup>60</sup>

Orthodoxos further argues from 1 Tim 2:5–6 that Christ is rightly called "a human being" (ἄνθρωπος) for he shares the same substance of Godhead with the Father, while with us he shares the substance of human beings. Thus uniting two distinct natures, which respectively belong to separate orders of existence (i.e., the created and uncreated orders), Jesus Christ is rightly called a mediator.<sup>61</sup> Since Christ is the mediator between God and human beings he must have both the divine and human natures, for otherwise the ontological gap between the two orders of existence to which the natures respectively belong—uncreated and created—, could not have been bridged.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, Orthodoxos argues that Christ's human nature did not change into divinity even after the passion and resurrection, but that both natures continue to exist.<sup>63</sup> He finds evidence for this teaching in the appellation that St. Paul used in reference to Christ; namely, although he wrote after the passion and resurrection, he still called him "a human being" (ἄνθρωπος) (cf. Acts 17:31; cf. 1 Tim 2:5–6; 1 Cor 15:21).<sup>64</sup> Likewise, Peter referred to Christ as "a human being" (Acts 2:22).<sup>65</sup> Theodoret explains the absence of clear

59 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.91 (ibid.). Theodoret lists heretics and their teachings that may lead to misunderstanding of the union with regards to Christ's divinity or humanity; cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 92–5.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 115–8.

60 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.97 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 120.).

61 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.99: "But since he was joined to the Father as God with the same substance he took from us the form of the slave, he has rightly been called a mediator, because he joined diverse realities in himself through the union of the natures, i.e., the divinity and humanity" (ibid., 122.: "Ἐπεὶ δὲ ὡς θεὸς συνήπται τῷ πατρὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχων οὐσίαν, ὡς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἡμῖν, ἐξ ἡμῶν γὰρ ἔλαβε τὴν τοῦ δούλου μορφὴν, εἰκότως μεσίτης ὠνόμασται, συνάπτων ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ διεστῶτα τῇ ἐνώσει τῶν φύσεων, θεότητος λέγω καὶ ἀνθρωπότητος").

62 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.105 (ibid., 127–28.).

63 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.105–6 and 110 (ibid., 128 and 32.).

64 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.105–6 (ibid., 128.).

65 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.106 (ibid.).

reference to Christ's flesh after the resurrection by the fact that Gospel evidence about Christ implies its reality:

it is absolutely superfluous to speak about the visible flesh, for it was clearly seen eating, drinking, working, and sleeping. But still, putting aside the many different things that happened before the passion, after the resurrection, when the apostles did not believe, he showed them, not the divinity, but the humanity. For he says, "See, my hands and my feet, that it is truly I; touch me and see, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have."<sup>66</sup>

Orthodoxos calls for the recognition of the two natures in Christ, to which Eranistes replies that he accepts "... two [natures] before the union, but, when they came together, they formed one nature."<sup>67</sup> Explaining the statement, Eranistes makes a distinction between the Incarnation, which he defines as "the assumption of the flesh," and the "union of natures," which he defines as "the joining together of separate things."<sup>68</sup> However, Orthodoxos effortlessly refutes the assertion by pointing out that the divine nature of the Logos was the only nature of Christ that preexisted his conception, while the flesh had received the beginning of its existence at the moment of the angelic annunciation.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, no interval of time passed between the assumption of the flesh and the union of natures:

... if not even a moment of time intervened between the assumption of the flesh and the union, and if the assumed nature did not exist before the assumption and the union, Incarnation and union refer to the same

66 Theodoret, *Eranistes* II.110 (ibid., 132.: "Μάλιστα μὲν περιττὸν ἦν περὶ τῆς ὀρωμένης διαλεχθῆναι σαρκός· ἐναργῶς γὰρ ἑώρατο, καὶ ἐσθίουσα καὶ πίνουσα καὶ κοπιῶσα καὶ καθεύδουσα. Πλὴν ὅμως, ἵνα τὰ πρὸ τοῦ πάθους παρῶ πολλά γε ὄντα καὶ διάφορα, μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἀπιστοῦσι τοῖς ἀποστόλοις οὐ τὴν θεότητα, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα ἔδειξε· Βλέπετε, γὰρ φησι, τὰς χεῖράς μου καὶ τοὺς πόδας μου, ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐγώ εἰμι· ψηλαφήσατέ με, καὶ ἴδετε, ὅτι πνεῦμα σάρκα καὶ ὅστέα οὐκ ἔχει, καθὼς ἐμὲ θεωρεῖτε ἔχοντα").

67 Theodoret, *Eranistes* II.110 (ibid.: "Δύο πρὸ τῆς ἐνώσεως ἦσαν· συνελθοῦσαι δὲ μίαν ἀπετέλεσαν φύσιν").

68 Theodoret, *Eranistes* II.111 (ibid., 133.: "Ἡ μὲν γὰρ σάρκωσις τῆς σαρκὸς δηλοῖ τὴν ἀνάληψιν, ἡ δὲ γε ἔνωσις τὴν τῶν διεστώτων συνάφειαν").

69 Theodoret, *Eranistes* II.110–11 (ibid., 132–33.: "Οὐκοῦν οὐ δύο ἦσαν πρὸ τῆς ἐνώσεως φύσεις, ἀλλὰ μία μόνη. Εἰ γὰρ προϋπάρχει μὲν ἡ θεότης, ἡ δὲ γε ἀνθρωπότης οὐ συνυπάρχει διεπλάσθη γὰρ μετὰ τὸν ἀγγελικὸν ἀσπασμόν, συνήπται δὲ τῇ διαπλάσει ἡ ἔνωσις, μία ἄρα φύσις πρὸ τῆς ἐνώσεως ἦν, ἡ αἰεὶ οὖσα καὶ πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων οὖσα").

thing, and there was, therefore, one nature before the union or Incarnation; while after the union it is proper to affirm two [natures], the one that assumed and the one that was assumed.<sup>70</sup>

The debate now takes a turn towards examining the implications of the reality of two natures. Orthodoxos insists that the two natures remained intact after the union. He provides Scriptural support which demonstrates that properties of both divine and human natures are evident in Jesus. (The divinity is evident from John 1:1–3, while the human descent is evident from Matthew 1 and Luke 3:23–38).<sup>71</sup> When Eranistes complained that the existence of two natures implies the division of Christ in two Sons, Orthodoxos counters that confessing two natures does not necessarily imply separation of the flesh from God the Logos, because the Logos existed from eternity as God, while the human nature of Christ has a beginning in time. Conversely, it safeguards against the misconception of the union as commingling.<sup>72</sup> However, the properties of the human nature can be predicated of the “Logos incarnate,” i.e., the person of Jesus Christ: “both [sets of properties] are proper to Christ the Lord, but [I do this] because I see two natures in him and attribute to each one its proper qualities. If Christ was one nature, however, how can one refer contrary predicates to it?”<sup>73</sup> The fact that the union could not have involved change in the divine nature of the Logos means that he was not changed into flesh, but assumed it (σάρκα λαβὼν ἐσαρκώθη).<sup>74</sup> Consequently, both sets of predicates, those proper to the Logos *qua* God and those proper to a human being, apply to Christ as the incarnate Logos: “If he became flesh, therefore, not by changing, but by taking flesh, and if both sets of predicates apply to the incarnate God, the natures

70 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.112 (ibid., 133–34.: “Οὐκοῦν εἰ μὴδὲ τὸ ἀκαριαῖον τοῦ χρόνου τῆς λήψεως τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῆς ἐνώσεως γεγένηται μέσον, ἡ δὲ ληφθεῖσα φύσις οὐ προϋπήρχε τῆς λήψεως καὶ τῆς ἐνώσεως· ταῦτὸ μὲν πρᾶγμα σημαίνουσι σάρκωσίς τε καὶ ἔνωσις· μία δὲ ἄρα φύσις πρὸ τῆς ἐνώσεως ἦγουν σαρκώσεως ἦν, μετὰ δὲ γε τὴν ἔνωσιν δύο λέγειν προσήκει, τὴν τε λαβοῦσαν καὶ τὴν ληφθεῖσαν”).

71 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.112–13 (ibid., 134–35.).

72 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.113: “We don’t separate the flesh from God the Word either, nor do we make the union a mixture” (ibid., 134.: “Οὐτε χωρίζομεν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου τὴν σάρκα, οὔτε σύγχρυσιν ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἔνωσιν”).

73 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.114 (ibid., 135.: “Κἀγὼ καὶ ταῦτα κάκεινα προσήκειν φημί τῷ δεσπότῃ Χριστῷ, ἀλλὰ δύο φύσεις ἐν αὐτῷ θεωρῶν, καὶ ἑκατέρῃ προσνέμων τὰ πρόσφορα. Εἰ δὲ μία φύσις ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστός, πῶς οἶόν τε αὐτῇ προσαρμόσαι τὰ ἐναντία”).

74 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.115 (ibid., 137.).

were not mingled together, but remained unmixed.”<sup>75</sup> Further, this union is free of necessity on the part of the Logos, who took on a human nature out “of good will (εὐδοκίας), of love for humanity, and of grace.”<sup>76</sup> Thus, the divine and human natures have not been mingled, since the Logos became incarnate not by changing into flesh, but by assuming flesh, i.e., the divine and human natures were not commingled to form a new entity, neither was the human nature swallowed by the divine nature.<sup>77</sup> Theodoret consistently argued that while in the union of the natures a new person (πρόσωπον) was formed, both natures retained their full identities: “this is the way one should speak about Christ the Lord: When we discuss the natures we should attribute its proper qualities to each one and realize that some belong to the divinity and others to humanity. But when we speak about the person (πρόσωπον), we must make the properties of natures common and attribute both types to Christ the Savior.”<sup>78</sup>

Orthodoxos seals his argument for the distinction of natures by appealing to the transcendence of the divine nature and its uncreated order of existence. Only closely related natures can be mixed, while in the case of divinity and humanity “the difference is infinite, and so much so, that no image of reality can be found.”<sup>79</sup> Eranistes uses the example of the mixture of a drop of honey and seawater, arguing that it can reflect the reality of the union of divinity and humanity in Christ, in which the humanity must have been absorbed by the infinitely greater divine nature: “In the same way that the sea absorbs a drop of honey. For when that drop is mixed with seawater, it immediately disappears.”<sup>80</sup>

75 Ibid.: “Εἰ τοίνυν οὐ τραπείς ἀλλὰ σάρκα λαβὼν ἐσαρκώθη, ἀρμόττει δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ταῦτα κάκεῖνα ὡς σαρκωθέντι θεῷ· τοῦτο γὰρ εἶπας ἀρτίως· οὐ συνεχύθησαν αἱ φύσεις, ἀλλ’ ἔμειναν ἀκραιφνεῖς”). I have slightly corrected G. Ettlinger’s translation (Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.115) to reflect the Greek original more faithfully.

76 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.116 (ibid., 138.: “[ἐνωσις] τὸ ὅλον εὐδοκίας ἐστὶ, καὶ φιλανθρωπίας καὶ χάριτος.”)

77 Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.123: “For how could the simple and uncompounded nature, that embraces the universe and is inaccessible and infinite, have swallowed a nature that it assumed?” (ibid., 143.: “Πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἡ ἀπλή καὶ ἀσύνθετος φύσις, ἡ περιλήπτικὴ τῶν ὅλων, ἡ ἀνέφικτος, ἡ ἀπερίγραφος, κατέπιεν ἥν ἀνέλαβε φύσιν”).

78 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.118 (ibid., 139.: “Οὕτω τοιγαροῦν καὶ τοὺς περὶ τοῦ δεσπότου Χριστοῦ ποιεῖσθαι προσήκει λόγους· καὶ περὶ μὲν τῶν φύσεων διαλεγομένους ἀπονέμειν ἑκατέρᾳ τὰ πρόσφορα, καὶ εἰδέναι τίνα μὲν τῆς θεότητος, τίνα δὲ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος ἴδια. Ὅταν δέ γε τοὺς περὶ τοῦ προσώπου ποιῶμεθα λόγους, κοινὰ χρῆ ποιεῖν τὰ τῶν φύσεων ἴδια καὶ ταῦτα κάκεῖνα τῷ σωτῆρι προσαρμόττειν Χριστῷ”). Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.116 (ibid., 138.).

79 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.123 (ibid., 144.).

80 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.123 (ibid., 143.: “Ὡς ἡ θάλασσα μέλιτος προσλαβοῦσα σταγόνα. Φρούδος γὰρ εὐθύς ἡ σταγὼν ἐκείνη γίνεται τῷ τῆς θαλάττης ὕδατι μιγνυμένη.”)

However, Orthodoxos counters that the analogy is inadequate because the two elements have similar natures and, most importantly, both belong to the order of created beings: "... both have a nature that is liquid, wet, and fluid; they exist in the same way as creatures, and also have in common a lack of soul; and yet each one of them is called a body."<sup>81</sup>

Eranistes further points out that after the Resurrection Christ's body exhibited properties uncharacteristic of a human nature. However, Orthodoxos is adamant that although after the resurrection Christ's body is incorruptible, incapable of suffering, and immortal, it has not been changed into the divine nature.<sup>82</sup> He further argues that God does not have a body, while the Scriptural evidence proves that Christ retained his body after the Resurrection (Luke 24:38–39, 41–43).<sup>83</sup> A body is substance (οὐσία) which is informed by accidental properties (συμβεβηκός) (e.g., sickness, good health).<sup>84</sup> Therefore, the fact that Christ's body after the resurrection changed certain properties (e.g., was not limited by matter—Christ could walk through closed doors), does not necessitate change into the substance of Godhead. The underlying presupposition of the argument is that Godhead cannot be associated with a body, i.e., the substance of a body must be different from that of the Godhead.

The second dialogue is also followed by a florilegium supporting the arguments made by Orthodoxos. This florilegium contains 112 citations from twenty-one writers, ranging from Ignatius of Antioch to writers contemporary with Theodoret. It also ends with quotations from Apollinarius. One of the peculiarities of this dialogue is the inclusion of citations from Cyril of Alexandria, who is cited immediately preceding Apollinarius. The other two florilegia do not contain passages from Cyril's writings. The main focus of the quoted passages is proof of the reality of the human nature in Christ. It is interesting to note that in this florilegium one finds no fewer than eleven passages that emphatically exhibit the *homo assumptus* language, i.e., the Logos assuming the flesh of or indwelling in "a human being."<sup>85</sup>

81 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.123 (ibid., 143–44.: "Ῥυτὴν γὰρ ἔχουσι καὶ ὑγρὰν καὶ ῥοώδη τὴν φύσιν ἀμφοτέραι· καὶ τὸ εἶναι δὲ αὐταῖς ὁμοίως κτιστόν, καὶ τὸ ἄψυχον δὲ ὡσαύτως κοινόν, καὶ μέντοι καὶ σῶμα αὐτῇ κάκεινῃ καλεῖται").

82 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11. 126–28 (ibid., 146–48.).

83 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11. 126 (ibid., 146.).

84 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11. 129: "... the body should be called a substance, and sickness and good health should be called accidental attributes" (ibid., 149.: "... τὸ σῶμα οὐσίαν κλητέον, καὶ τὴν νόσον καὶ τὴν ὑγίαν συμβεβηκός").

85 The quoted passages which contain *homo assumptus* language are: Hippolytus, *On Matthew* 25 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 136.); Eustathius of Antioch,



It must be noted that G. Ettlinger's translation of the passage from Gregory of Nazianzus's *Discourse 38: On the Divine Manifestation* [Nativity] (passage number 45 in this florilegium) is somewhat ambiguous. The passage refers to the duality of natures in the Incarnation: "For he came forth from the virgin, therefore, through the assumption of two contrary realities, flesh and spirit, the first of which was assumed into God, while the other bestowed the grace of the divinity."<sup>86</sup> Ettlinger's translation leaves room for misinterpretation of Gregory's (and Theodoret's) intention. However, the very next passage from the same work which Theodoret cites, elucidates Gregory's thought. It affirms Christ's human nature after the Incarnation: "He was sent as a human being (ἄνθρωπος). For his nature was twofold, and for this reason undoubtedly, because of the law governing a human body, he grew weary, hungry, thirsty, was in agony, and wept."<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the verb προσλαμβάνω has the meaning of "to receive in addition" or "to take besides."<sup>88</sup> Therefore, it is beyond doubt that Gregory's thought includes the existence of Christ's human nature. Consequently, the translation could be improved by rendering the phrase εἰς τὸν θεὸν προσειληφθῆναι as "conjoined to God," instead of Ettlinger's "assumed into God"; the latter phrase is open to the interpretation that it suggests the absorption of Christ's human nature into Godhead.

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*On the Titular Inscriptions, Discourse on the text, "The Lord created me in the beginning of his ways"* (ibid., 139.); Athanasius of Alexandria, *The Discourses Against the Arians 2.70; The Greater Discourse About Faith* [this work is attributed to Marcellus of Ancyra in CPG] (ibid., 141 and 43.); Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium 3.3.43–44* (ibid., 154.); John Chrysostom, *On the text, "Do not be afraid, when a human being becomes rich"; Exposition of Psalm 41* (ibid., 158.); Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity 9.3 and 5–7* (ibid., 165.); Augustine, *The book of correction 3.27–4.12* (ibid., 168.).

- 86 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.152 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 167.: "Ἐπειδὴ τοῖνυν προήλθεν ἐκ τῆς παρθένου μετὰ τῆς προσλήψεως ἐκ δύο τῶν ἑαυτοῖς ἐναντίων σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος. Ὡν τὸ μὲν αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν θεὸν προσειληφθῆναι, τὸ δὲ τὴν χάριν παρέσχηκε τῆς θεότητος").
- 87 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.152 (ibid., 168.: "Ἀπεστάλη μὲν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἄνθρωπος. Διπλὴ γὰρ ἦν ἡ φύσις αὐτοῦ, ἀμέλει τοι ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκοπίασε, καὶ ἐπέεινε, καὶ ἐδίψησε, καὶ ἡγωνίασε, καὶ ἐδάκρυσεν, ἀνθρωπίνου σώματος νόμῳ").
- 88 Cf. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. 1178. Ettlinger's choice of translation for the verb προσλαμβάνω—"assume"—comes only as the third option in Lampe's *Lexicon*. It comes as a surprise that in the context of the *Eranistes* he preferred that option, since the *Lexicon* gives a citation from Gregory of Nazianzus, which contains the same verb in the Christological context, clearly emphasizing the existence of Christ's humanity after the Incarnation (cf. 39.13 [PG 36.349A]).



### 5.2.4 *Dialogue III—“Impassible” (ἀπαθής)*

The third dialogue is dedicated to the question of whether the Logos *qua* God participated in Christ's passion. After reiterating that the Logos is *immutable* and that he became human by taking human nature,<sup>89</sup> Orthodoxos proceeds to affirm that after the union of the natures in the Incarnation he remains unmixed, impassible, unchangeable, and unlimited.<sup>90</sup>

In this dialogue Orthodoxos argues that the Logos shares in the substance of the Father, and since his nature is immortal, the Logos *qua* God cannot experience death when joined to the human nature.<sup>91</sup> Suffering and death are foreign to the divine nature, and the experience of either would entail change in the divine nature, which is logically impossible.<sup>92</sup> The inability of the divine nature to suffer or die, or to commit sin and become evil, must not be considered to be a limitation of the divine nature; it is rather “a sign of unlimited power, not of weakness,”<sup>93</sup> and also provides proof that the Logos is immutable (ἄτρεπτος) and unchangeable (ἀναλλοίωτος).<sup>94</sup> An exception allowing change in the case of the immortality and impassibility of the divine nature would entail weakness on the part of Godhead, since such a change involves instability: “... please, tell me why you say that only immortality and impassibility are mutable? And why do you allow capacity for change in their case and attribute to God a power that is a sign of weakness.”<sup>95</sup>

Orthodoxos further affirms that the passion of Christ is proper not to the Logos *qua* God, but to the human nature that he assumed. The previous two dialogues have established that Christ exists as truly God and truly a human being (θεὸς ἀληθῶς καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἀληθῶς), since he was God from all eternity and he assumed humanity.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, Orthodoxos concludes that in Christ there suffered the nature that was capable of suffering, i.e., the human nature: “...he suffered the passion as a human being (ἄνθρωπος), but remained

89 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.178 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 189.: “ἐνηνθρόπῳησεν... ἀνθρωπεῖαν φύσιν τελείαν λαβών”).

90 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.178 (ibid.: “ἀκήρατος, ἀπαθής, ἀναλλοίωτος, ἀπερίγραφος”).

91 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.178–79 (ibid., 189–90.).

92 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.183–84 (ibid., 194–95.).

93 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.186 (ibid., 196.).

94 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.186 (ibid.).

95 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.187 (ibid., 197.: “...μόνας τὴν ἀθανασία καὶ τὴν ἀπάθειαν τρεπτάς εἶναί φατε, καὶ τὸ δύνατον τῆς ἀλλοιώσεως ἐπ’ αὐτῶν συγχωρεῖτε, καὶ διδοτε τῷ θεῷ δύναμιν ἀσθενείας δηλωτικήν”).

96 Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.187 (ibid., 198.).

beyond suffering as God.”<sup>97</sup> Thus, just as with the human constitution, where certain characteristics are predicated of the soul while others are considered as proper to the body, so it is also with Christ, who exists in two natures: certain properties are proper to the Logos, while others are proper to the assumed human nature.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, the differing properties of the natures by no means constitutes a division of Christ’s person (πρόσωπον), which is the predicate of all attributions: “. . . there is admittedly a union of unlike natures, the person (πρόσωπον) of Christ is the subject of both sets of predicates because of the union, but those that are proper to each nature are attributed to it: inability to grow weary to the infinite nature and weariness to the nature that moves and walks.”<sup>99</sup> The union of divinity and humanity in Christ was such that it created not one nature, but one personal entity, one undivided person (ἐν πρόσωπον ἀδιαίρετον), who is both God and a human being (ἄνθρωπος), and is the subject of all attributions, both divine and human: “For we preach such a union of divinity and humanity that we apprehend one undivided person, and know that the same one is both God and a human being, visible and invisible, limited and infinite; and everything else that reveals the divinity and the humanity we attribute to the one person.”<sup>100</sup>

The dialogue then turns to clarifying the language of the passion of Christ. One can properly say that Christ suffered, but not that the Logos suffered, for Christ is the common name of the united natures. This attribution of suffering to the person of Christ does not imply that the Logos suffered, even though he was a constituent part of the person. A rough analogy would be the example of a dead human being, who is both soul and body. Though the body lies dead in a tomb, yet no one would think that the soul is enclosed within the tomb, since death and physical enclosure are not among its properties.<sup>101</sup> Orthodoxos

97 Theodore, *Eranistes* 11.187 (ibid.: “ὡς ἄνθρωπος τὸ πάθος ὑπέμεινεν· ὡς δὲ θεὸς κρείττων πάθους μεμένηκε”).

98 Theodore, *Eranistes* 11.190 (ibid., 200.).

99 Theodore, *Eranistes* 11.192 (ibid., 202.: “. . . τῆς τῶν ἀνομοίων φύσεων ὁμολογηθείσης ἐνώσεως δέχεται μὲν τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ταῦτα κάκεῖνα διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν, ἑκατέρᾳ δὲ γε φύσει τὰ πρόσφορα προσαρμόττεται, τῇ μὲν ἀπεριγράφῳ τὸ ἄπνονον, τῇ δὲ μεταβινοῦσῃ καὶ βαδίζουσῃ ὁ κόπος”).

100 Theodore, *Eranistes* 11.200 (ibid., 209.: “Θεότητος γὰρ ἡμεῖς καὶ ἀνθρωπότητος τοιαύτην κηρύττομεν ἔνωσιν, ὡς ἐννοεῖν ἐν πρόσωπον ἀδιαίρετον, καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν θεόν τε εἶδέναι καὶ ἄνθρωπον, ὀρώμενον καὶ ἀόρατον, περιγεγραμμένον καὶ ἀπερίγραφον, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα δὲ πάντα, ὅσα τῆς θεότητος καὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος ὑπάρχει δηλωτικά, τῷ προσώπῳ τῷ ἐνὶ προσαρμόττομεν”). Cf. also Theodore, *Eranistes* 11.219: “The properties of the natures were common to the person” (ibid., 226.: “Κοινὰ τοῦ προσώπου γέγονε τὰ τῶν φύσεων ἴδια”).

101 Theodore, *Eranistes* 11.203 (ibid., 212.).

contends that one must avoid attributing passion to the Logos by saying that the “Logos suffered in the flesh,” even if one is thinking about the suffering of the humanity assumed by the Logos, because such a statement is “talking about a manner of suffering not impassibility.”<sup>102</sup> Naturally, any kind of suffering is irreconcilable with the properties of the divine nature.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, the passion ought to be attributed only to Christ, who is the incarnate Logos, just as the Scriptures invariably attributed suffering or death to him:

The name “Christ,” in the case of our Lord and savior, signifies God the Word after he became human . . . but when the name “God the Word” is spoken in this way, it signifies the simple nature that exists before the world, beyond time, and has no body. That is why the Holy Scriptures, who spoke through the holy apostles, never attributed sufferings or death to this designation.<sup>104</sup>

Orthodoxos affirms that the suffering of the Logos in Christ was unnecessary. One ought not argue from the analogy of soul and body that the human soul participates in the suffering of the body, and that consequently the Logos must have suffered. This argument is skewed, because the Logos did not take the place of the soul; rather, Christ had a human soul endowed with reason. This means that it was Christ’s soul that suffered and not the divinity.<sup>105</sup>

The third dialogue is also followed by a florilegium from authoritative Church Fathers. The purpose of the florilegium is to provide proof of the impassibility of the divine nature in Christ. It contains seventy-five quotations from eighteen authors, ranging from Ignatius of Antioch to Severian of Gabala. The collection ends with quotations from Apollinarius (eight citations) and Eusebius of Emesa (two citations), who again serve the purpose of reducing the arguments of Eranistes to absurdity.

Theodoret’s main criterion for choosing passages with a strong emphasis on the humanity of Christ was to support his argument for the impassibility of the

<sup>102</sup> Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.210 (ibid., 218.).

<sup>103</sup> Orthodoxos rejects the notion that the Logos “suffered in an impassible way,” since that which is impassible does not suffer, and that which suffered cannot remain impassible. Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.211 (ibid.).

<sup>104</sup> Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.208 (ibid., 216.): “Τὸ Χριστὸς ὄνομα ἐπὶ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν τὸν ἐνανθρωπήσαντα θεὸν λόγον δηλοῖ . . . τὸ δὲ γε θεὸς λόγος οὕτωςι λεγόμενον τὴν ἀπλήν φύσιν, τὴν προκόσμιον, τὴν ὑπέρχρονον, τὴν ἀσώματον σημαίνει. Οὐδὲ γὰρ χάριν τὸ πανάγιον πνεῦμα τὸ διὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων φθεγγόμενον οὐδαμοῦ πάθος ἢ θάνατον τῇδε τῇ προσηγορίᾳ προσήρμοσεν”).

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 11.212 (ibid., 219–20.).

Logos. This florilegium, like the previous one, contains no fewer than eleven passages that affirm Christ's humanity not in generic terms as "human nature," but categorically as "a human being."<sup>106</sup>

### 5.2.5 *Epilogue*

The work ends with an epilogue which provides a concise summary of the arguments from the three dialogues. In a number of medieval manuscripts, this part is often presented as a separate work under the title *Demonstratio per syllogismos*.<sup>107</sup> However, the academic consensus is that Theodoret's reference to it in the prologue makes it indubitably an integral part of the *Eranistes*.<sup>108</sup>

The summary of the arguments from the **first dialogue** contains twelve syllogisms arguing for the immutability of the Logos. The first three syllogisms affirm that the Logos did not become flesh by changing into flesh, since he shares the same immutable substance of the Father.<sup>109</sup> Syllogisms 4–8 expound on John 1:14, arguing that the Scriptural reference to the Logos becoming flesh does not imply a change into flesh on behalf of the Logos, but presents the Incarnation as the taking on of both human body and soul. In syllogisms 9–10 Theodoret advances the argument that the fact that the Gospel reference to the

106 Cf. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies* 3.18.3 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 223.); Eustathius of Antioch, *Discourse on the text*, "The Lord created me in the beginning of his ways" (ibid., 225–28.); *Discourse on the inscriptions of the gradual psalms* (ibid., 228–29.); *Commentary on Psalm 92* (ibid., 229.); Athanasius of Alexandria (rather Marcellus of Ancyra), *The greater discourse about faith* (ibid., 231.); Amphilochius of Iconium, *Fragment 11 Discourse on the text*, "Amen, amen I say to you, 'Whosoever hears my word'" (ibid., 239.); *Fragment 12 (Discourse on the text, "My Father is greater than I")* (ibid.); *Fragment 7 Discourse on the text, "Father, if it is possible"* (ibid., 240.); *Fragment 2 Discourse on the text, "My Father is greater than I"* (ibid.); *Fragment 1 (Discourse about the Son)* (ibid.).

107 There are two families of manuscripts, one containing the *Eranistes* without the epilogue and the other containing only the epilogue, copied as a separate work under the title *Demonstrationes per syllogismos*. Ettlinger identified the following manuscripts as members of the first family: Alexandria, Bibl. Patr. 266, s.xvi; Wrocław, Bibl. Univ. 240, s.xv; Vatican City, Vaticanus gr. 678, s.xiv. The following manuscripts belong to the second family: Paris, Bibl. Nat., ms. grec. 174, s.x–xi; Venice, Bibl. Marc., ms. gr. 521, s.xiv; Vatican City, Vaticanus gr. 402, a. 1383; Vatican City, Vaticanus gr. 1511, s.xv; Vatican City, Vaticanus gr. 1744, s.xv; Vatican City, Ottobonianus gr. 213, s.xv. Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 38–39.; Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*. 334.

108 Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 6, n. 1.; Young and Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*. 334.

109 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 253.

Incarnation does not mention the soul by no means signifies its absence from the union of natures in Christ.<sup>110</sup> The evangelist spoke about “only that which was visible . . . in order to reveal the infinite benignity” of God’s economy.<sup>111</sup> Syllogisms 11–12 see in the incarnate Logos the fulfillment of the august promises God made to the patriarchs and prophets (cf. Ps 132:11, Acts 2:30, Heb 2:16), which would have remained unfulfilled had the Logos changed into flesh: “God the Word, therefore, did not undergo a transformation into flesh, but in accordance with the promise took the first fruit from David’s seed.”<sup>112</sup>

The summary of the **second dialogue** also contains twelve syllogisms which prove that the union of natures was free of mixture or commingling. The first syllogism maintains that the commingling of natures would obliterate both natures and create a third, which would be neither divine nor human.<sup>113</sup> Syllogisms 2–8 affirm that the union of natures took place at the moment of conception, and that characteristics of both natures are discernible in the Scriptures, which leads to the conclusion that both divine and human natures were present in Christ. The Scriptural examples given in support of the argument emphasize the properties of the human nature (e.g., Christ was circumcised, he slept, grew weary or hungry, experienced agony and perspiration in expectation of the passion).<sup>114</sup> Syllogisms 9–10 insist that the human nature of Christ was not changed into divinity, since even after the union of the natures at conception Christ’s body “remained within limits of its nature” (still had limbs, wounds, scars).<sup>115</sup> The final two syllogisms (11–12) demonstrate that even after the Ascension into heaven Christ’s body remained a body (cf. Stephen’s vision in Acts 7:35) which will be seen by all human nature at the second coming of Jesus.<sup>116</sup> The conclusion drawn from the two syllogisms is that “there is not one nature of flesh and divinity; for the union is free of commingling.”<sup>117</sup>

The final set of syllogisms, summarizing the main points made in the **third dialogue**, refers to the impassibility of the Logos in the Incarnation. This part contains sixteen syllogisms. The first three contend that since the Father and the Logos share the same substance of Godhead, which is impassible by

110 Ibid., 255–56.

111 Ibid., 256.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid., 256–57.

114 Ibid., 257–59.

115 Ibid., 260.

116 Ibid., 260–61.

117 Ibid., 261.: “οὐκ ἄρα μία φύσις σαρκὸς καὶ θεότητος· ἀσύγχυτος γὰρ ἡ ἕνωσις.”

definition, it is impossible for the nature of the Logos *qua* God to suffer in any way in Christ.<sup>118</sup> The purpose of syllogisms 4, 13, and 15 is to prove that the impassibility of the Logos was not affected in the Incarnation, since its purpose was to sacrifice the human nature of the incarnate Logos as a ransom. Thus, the sacrifice is proper to the human nature, and not to the Logos *qua* God.<sup>119</sup> The next two syllogisms (5–6) draw the conclusion from the Scriptural titles of Christ (e.g., “first-born from the dead” (Col 1:18) and “the first fruit of those who had fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15:20)) that the passion of Christ must refer to his humanity, since the divine nature is immortal by definition.<sup>120</sup> In syllogisms 7–9 and 14, Theodoret argues that the Logos resurrected the body, which had died and was crucified. The body was not life-giving; it became immortal only after the Resurrection. However, the Logos who gave immortality to the body could not have possibly shared in death.<sup>121</sup> In syllogisms 10–12 one finds the argument that it was unnecessary for the Logos *qua* God to suffer in Christ because he had a body and a human soul, which are passible by nature.<sup>122</sup> Thus, when one hears that “Christ suffered in the flesh” (1 Peter 4:1), one ought to have in mind the human nature, since the name “Christ” signifies the incarnate Logos and not the Logos *qua* God.<sup>123</sup> In the final syllogism (16), Theodoret insists that the attribution of suffering only to the human nature does not necessitate a separation of the natures, since other properties accidental to the human nature (e.g., hunger, thirst, weariness, sleeping, etc.) are attributed exclusively to it. Theodoret concludes: “It [divine nature] did not experience pain from the suffering, but it made the suffering its own, since it was [the suffering] of its own temple and of the flesh that was united [to it]; and because of [this flesh] those who believe are called members of Christ, and he has been named head of those who have believed.”<sup>124</sup>

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118 Ibid.

119 Ibid., 261–62 and 64–65.

120 Ibid., 262.

121 Ibid., 262–63 and 64.

122 Ibid., 263–64.

123 Ibid., 263.

124 Ibid., 265. (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 265.: “δδύνην μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πάθους οὐ δεχομένη, τὸ δὲ πάθος οἰκειωσαμένη, ὡς ναοῦ γε ἰδίου, καὶ σαρκὸς ἡνωμένης, δι’ ἣν καὶ μέλη Χριστοῦ χρηματίζουσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες, καὶ τῶν πεπιστευκότων αὐτὸς ὠνόμασται κεφαλὴ”).

### 5.3 Conclusion

This section has made an attempt at presenting the mature Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus. It has been argued that his *Eranistes* serves this purpose well. Written in AD 447, some twenty years after the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy and at the dawn of the Council of Chalcedon, *Eranistes* is the most representative work for the study of Theodoret's mature Christological thought. Moreover, it is the only work that contains substantial Christological material from this period of his output.

In the *Eranistes*, Theodoret engages in a mostly fictional debate with an imaginary Cyril of Alexandria and his Ephesine party. The work was not intended to be a direct attack on Cyril but a subtle challenge to his theological prestige. When we bear in mind that Theodoret did recognize Cyril's Christology after the latter signed the *Tomos of Reunion*, this posthumous attack on his Christological language must have been an attempt at restoring the theological prestige of the Antiochenes. After all, at this point in time Theodoret put much effort into arguing that the Antiochene religious tradition is just as worthy, if not even worthier, than the Alexandrine tradition (cf. *Historia religiosa*). The generally mild tone of the dialogues is reminiscent of Theodoret's technique in the *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas*: in both works he assumed the role of teacher and instructor, rather than that of prosecutor. The *Eranistes* abounds with references to various heretical doctrines, but the comparisons of the opponent's teachings with those doctrines serve the purpose of demonstrating their incompetence while concurrently encouraging correction. Once again, Theodoret acts as an instructor in Christological orthodoxy.

The *Eranistes* reveals the most important concepts for Theodoret's mature Christology. These are conveniently ordered into three dialogues: Immutable (ἀτρεπτος), Unmixed (ἀσύγχυτος), and Impassible (ἀπαθής). All of these adjectives describe the transcendent nature of the incarnate Logos. The divine nature of the Logos is utterly inaccessible, since it alone belongs to the uncreated order of existence, which fact necessitates the union effected in Christ to be without change or mixture in the Logos. The impassibility of the Logos is a consequence of the immutability. It also seems that his mature Christology was mostly concerned with explaining the statement in John 1:14 that the Logos became flesh. Throughout the *Eranistes*, he argued that the only theologically viable way of understanding this statement was to take it to mean that the Logos assumed a full human nature while remaining what he was—God. Any alternative language or interpretation of John 1:14 in terms of the Logos “becoming” or “changing” into something that he previously was not would seriously jeopardize the fullness of his divinity. Thus, even poetic expressions of

the Logos suffering in Christ must be avoided because they are perilously open to attacks on his divinity and challenge to his divine status. One must, however, equally avoid separating the Logos from the flesh, since his Incarnation was not an image or a symbol but a reality. The Logos indeed dwelled in the human nature, which he assumed, but was not commingled with the humanity or affected by the union with the human nature. Even after the Incarnation, the properties of the natures remain present in Christ. Thus both the divine and human natures continue to exist even after being united in the one person of Christ. The following section will make an attempt at explaining further these fundamental concepts of Theodoret's Christology.



# The Mature Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus: The Evidence of the *Eranistes*

## 6.1 The Christological Lexicon of the *Eranistes*

Theodoret begins his dialogues by laying out the philosophical context of the terminology employed in the Christological discourse of the *Eranistes*. He is concerned with the definition of substance (οὐσία), subsistence (ὑπόστασις), person (πρόσωπον), and properties (ιδιότητες).<sup>1</sup> These terms are used to describe the common and the particular in the theological discourse.

### 6.1.1 οὐσία and φύσις

Theodoret used the term substance (οὐσία) to describe that which is common in the Trinity: “Do we say that there is one substance of God—the Father, the only begotten Son, and the all-Holy Spirit—as we were taught by divine Scripture, both old and new, and by the fathers who were gathered at Nicaea, or do we follow the blasphemies of Arius?”<sup>2</sup> In the *Eranistes*, the term nature (φύσις) equally denotes what is common among the persons of the Trinity: “So terms that are predicated of the divine nature, such as “God,” “Lord,” “creator,” “ruler of all,” and other like them, are therefore common to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>3</sup> The equivalence of the two terms is most evident when Theodoret says: “. . . just as the term ‘human nature’ is a common name of this nature, we say in the same way that the divine substance signifies the Holy Trinity.”<sup>4</sup> As Ettlinger has pointed out, in the *Eranistes* the term “‘substance’

1 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 30.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 63.

2 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 31.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 64.: “Τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ πατὴρ καὶ τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ παναγίου πνεύματος, μίαν οὐσίαν φαμέν, ὡς παρὰ τῆς θείας γραφῆς ἐδιδάχθημεν παλαιὰς τε καὶ νέας καὶ τῶν ἐν Νικαίᾳ συνεληλυθότων πατέρων, ἢ ταῖς Ἀρείου βλασφημίαις ἀκολουθοῦμεν.”

3 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 33.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 65.: “Ὅσα τοῖνυν περὶ τῆς θείας λέγεται φύσεως, κοινὰ ταῦτά ἐστι τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, οἶον, τὸ θεός, τὸ κύριος, τὸ δημιουργός, τὸ παντοκράτωρ, καὶ ὅσα τοῦτοις ἐστὶ παραπλήσια.”

4 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 32.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 65.: “Ὡς περ τοῖνυν τὸ ἄνθρωπος ὄνομα κοινόν ἐστι ταύτης τῆς φύσεως ὄνομα, οὕτω τὴν θεϊκὴν οὐσίαν τὴν ἁγίαν τριάδα σημαίνειν φαμέν.”

means the being or reality of something, i.e., its essence . . . ‘nature’ appears to be the equivalent of substance.”<sup>5</sup>

The divine substance or nature is utterly transcendent and cannot possibly be accessed by humans. Orthodoxos made it clear in a rhetorical question that divine substance cannot be apprehended even in the Old Testament theophanies: “The people who saw these [i.e., Old Testament] revelations did not see God’s substance, did they?”<sup>6</sup>

The conclusion we draw is that in the *Eranistes*, just as in his early Christological writings, Theodoret reserved two terms to denote the broadest category that individuals or things have in common—substance (οὐσία) and nature (φύσις).

### 6.1.2 ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον

Theodoret pays special attention to the definition of the term subsistence (ὑπόστασις). The amount of detail he employs in the explanation testifies to the contentious nature of the term, which has already been evidenced in his *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas* of Cyril of Alexandria. In the *Eranistes*, Theodoret was set on removing any ambiguity in its interpretation. He points out the differences between the use of the term in classical philosophy and in the theology of the Christian Fathers. Whereas in the philosophical discourse the term substance (οὐσία) denoted “that which is” and the term subsistence (ὑπόστασις) signified “that which exists,” in Christian theology the term οὐσία is different from ὑπόστασις as the “common” is different from the “proper.” The difference is also likened to that between the genus (γένος) and species (εἶδος) or individual (ἄτομον).<sup>7</sup> Therefore, in the *Eranistes* the term subsistence (ὑπόστασις) is used exclusively to denote the particular in a person.

In the lexicon of the mature period of Theodoret’s Christological thought, the term subsistence (ὑπόστασις) signifies the same aspect of the being as the term person (πρόσωπον). However, they are interchangeable only when they denote the particular in a being. He reserved three distinct terms to describe the particular in a personal entity. They are πρόσωπον, ὑπόστασις, and ιδιότης:

5 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 16. See also Guinot, “De quelques réflexions de Théodoret de Cyr sur les notions d’ousia et d’hypostasis,” 200.

6 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 44.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 75.: “Οὐκοῦν οὐδὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν οὐσίαν εἶδον οἱ τὰς ἀποκαλύψεις ἐκείνας θεασάμενοι.”

7 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 64.: “Κατὰ μὲν τὴν θύραθεν σοφίαν οὐκ ἔχει. Ἡ τε γὰρ οὐσία τὸ ὄν σημαίνει, καὶ τὸ ὑφεστὸς ἢ ὑπόστασις. Κατὰ δέ γε τὴν τῶν πατέρων διδασκαλίαν, ἣν ἔχει διαφορὰν τὸ κοινὸν πρὸς τὸ ἴδιον, ἢ τὸ γένος πρὸς τὸ εἶδος ἢ τὸ ἄτομον, ταύτην ἢ οὐσία πρὸς τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχει.” Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 31.

“...we follow the limits set down by the holy fathers and say that subsistent entity (ὑπόστασις), person (πρόσωπον), and property (ιδιότης) all signify the same thing.”<sup>8</sup> However, Theodoret qualifies this statement when he speaks about the common and the particular in the Holy Trinity: “the divine substance signifies the Holy Trinity, while the subsistence points to a person, such as the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit.”<sup>9</sup> Thus the expression “the same thing” (ταὐτόν) ought to be interpreted in the context of Theodoret’s overall argument; namely, the terms equally signify the particular in a being, while they themselves are not identical and synonymous. Theodoret is clear that the subsistence serves only as an indication of person (ὑπόστασιν προσώπου τινὸς εἶναι δηλωτικήν). Thus it is evident that in the *Eranistes* Theodoret preserved his original understanding of person (πρόσωπον) as a broader term of which subsistence is a constituent part. As previously argued, in this understanding of the term, person (πρόσωπον) incorporates substance (οὐσία), subsistence (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως/ὑπόστασις), individual characteristics (ιδιότης), power (ἐνέργεια), etc.

## 6.2 The Christological Phraseology of the *Eranistes*

The mature Christology of Theodoret of Cyrillus reflects concerns and positions identical to his early Christological thought evidenced in the *Expositio rectae fidei*. His early Christology was conditioned by its purpose, i.e., the economy of salvation. The same concern is evident in the *Eranistes*, where Theodoret begins his arguments by asserting that the Logos assumed a complete human nature because it was necessary to reverse the consequences of the Protoplast’s offense: “For the whole first man became subject to sin and destroyed the characteristics of the divine image, and the race followed its

8 Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 32. Cf. Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Eranistes*. 65.: “τὴν θεϊαν οὐσίαν τὴν ἁγίαν τριάδα σημαίνειν φαμέν, τὴν δὲ γε ὑπόστασιν προσώπου τινὸς εἶναι δηλωτικήν, οἷον, ἢ τοῦ πατρὸς ἢ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἢ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. Τὴν γὰρ ὑπόστασιν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ τὴν ιδιότητα ταῦτόν σημαίνειν φαμέν τοῖς τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ὅροις ἀκολουθοῦντες.” The reference to patristic authority is most likely a reference to the Cappadocian theological lexicon analyzed above. Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus *Oration* 39.11: “...three individualities (ιδιότητες), or hypostases (ὑποστάσεις), if any prefer so to call them, or persons (πρόσωπα), for we will not quarrel about names so long as the syllables amount to the same meaning” (NPNF<sup>2</sup> 7.355; cf. PG 36.345).

9 Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Eranistes*. 65.: “τὴν θεϊαν οὐσίαν τὴν ἁγίαν τριάδα σημαίνειν φαμέν, τὴν δὲ γε ὑπόστασιν προσώπου τινὸς εἶναι δηλωτικήν, οἷον, ἢ τοῦ πατρὸς ἢ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἢ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος.” Cf. Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 32.

first ancestor; it was therefore out of necessity that the creator, in his desire to renew the image that had been obscured, assumed the whole nature and imprinted in it much better characteristics than the former ones.”<sup>10</sup> The soteriological nature of his apprehension of the Incarnation prompted the use of specific Christological phraseology.

### 6.2.1 *Homo assumptus: The Union of the Logos and the ἄνθρωπος in Christ*

As was mentioned earlier, modern scholarship that ventured to pass judgment on Theodoret's mature Christology has contended that he changed his terminology and concepts. In the early Christological writings he insisted on the portrayal of the Incarnation in terms of the Logos indwelling a human being (ἄνθρωπος). However, M. Richard, J. Stewardson, P. Clayton, and F. Young all argue that during the years of theological debates with Cyril of Alexandria it was Theodoret's theological lexicon that changed. Allegedly, he grew aware of the pitfalls of his insistence on the description of Christ's human component as “a human being.” Such language would jeopardize the full unity of the natures in Christ and would have the connotation of a mere conjunction. However, throughout the *Eranistes* Theodoret characterized Christ's humanity as a *human being* (ἄνθρωπος). This term was used to argue for the immutability of the Logos and the distinction of the natures in Christ, both of which safeguard the divinity of the Logos against Arian attacks. Christ is both God and a human being (ἄνθρωπος). Theodoret argues that before the Incarnation the Logos was called “God,” “Son of God,” “only-begotten,” “Lord,” “God the Word,” and “creator” (cf. John 1:1,3,4,9), while after he is called “Jesus” and “Christ.”<sup>11</sup> Christ is professed to be “joined to us as a human being (ἄνθρωπος) because he took from us the form of a slave” (cf. Phil 2:7).<sup>12</sup> Therefore, Theodoret consistently refers to Christ's human component as a human being.

Theodoret's choice of patristic citations in the florilegia leaves very little doubt about his conception of the Incarnation in terms of the Logos taking full human nature. The Christological imagery he employed in the illustrations

10 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 90.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 113.: “... Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ὅλος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐγένετο, καὶ τοὺς τῆς θείας εἰκόνος ἀπώλεσε χαρακτῆρας, ἡκολούθησε δὲ τῷ γενεάρχῃ τὸ γένος· ἀναγκαίως ὁ δημιουργὸς καινουργῆσαι τὴν ἁμαυρωθεῖσαν εἰκόνα θελήσας, ὅλην τὴν φύσιν ἀναλαβὼν πολλῶ τῶν προτέρων ἀμείνους ἐνετύπωσε χαρακτῆρας.”

11 Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 91.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 114.

12 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 98–99.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 122.

of his ideas paints a very different picture from the one painted in the scholarship. It is simply that Theodoret does not hesitate to express his understanding of the Incarnation using the terminology present in his writings from before the Nestorian controversy. Moreover, he repeatedly uses passages that would undoubtedly sound offensive to the ears of the Alexandrines after the fierce debates with Cyril of Alexandria. For example, he quotes from Hippolytus's *Commentary on Matthew* 25, where it is said that the Logos "wore a human being."<sup>13</sup> Also, the quotations from the *Great Discourse on Faith*, which Theodoret attributes to Athanasius of Alexandria, reflect the same language: "Now divinity has neither body nor blood, but the reason for these statements [i.e., Gospel references to Christ] was the human being (ἄνθρωπος) from Mary, whom he wore . . ."<sup>14</sup> Eustathius of Antioch is frequently cited referring to the humanity of Christ as "a human being": e.g., "the human being (ἄνθρωπος) who died rises up on the third day,"<sup>15</sup> and "in his letter he [Paul] calls the very human being (ἄνθρωπος) who was crucified 'Lord of Glory'";<sup>16</sup> and "the human being of the Christ is raised from the dead. . . ."<sup>17</sup> Theodoret even attributes the same ideas to Athanasius, quoting from *The Greater Discourse about Faith*: "The one who gives life to all the dead also gave it to the human being born of Mary, Jesus Christ, whom he assumed."<sup>18</sup> The same image of the Logos

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- 13 Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes* (English edition). 136.: "... they [heretics] also either profess that Christ appeared in life only as a human being, by denying the talent of his divinity, or by confessing that he was God, they deny in turn that he was a human being; and they teach that he tricked the vision of those who saw him; for he did not wear a human being as a human being, but instead was a kind of imaginary illusion; this resembles Marcion, Valentinus, and the Gnostics . . ."; Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes*. 155.: "... κάκεινοι, ἥτοι ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον ὁμολογοῦσι πεφηγνέναι τὸν Χριστὸν εἰς τὸν βίον, τῆς θεότητος αὐτοῦ τὸ τάλαντον ἀρνούμενοι, ἥτοι τὸν θεὸν ὁμολογοῦντες, ἀναίονται πάλιν τὸν ἄνθρωπον, πεφαντασιωκέναι διδάσκοντες τὰς ὁψεις αὐτῶν τῶν θεωμένων, ὡς ἄνθρωπον οὐ φορέσαντα ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ δόκησιν τινα φασματῶδη μᾶλλον γεγονέναι, οἷον ὥσπερ Μαρκίων καὶ Οὐαλεντίνος καὶ οἱ Γνωστικοί. . . ."
- 14 Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes* (English edition). 143.; Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes*. 160.: "Θεότης δὲ οὔτε σῶμα οὔτε αἷμα ἔχει, ἀλλ' ὃν ἐφόρεσεν ἐκ τῆς Μαρίας ἄνθρωπον, αἷτις τούτων γέγονε. . . ."
- 15 Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes* (English edition). 225.; Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes*. 231.: "Ὁ ἄνθρωπος γὰρ ὁ ἀποθανὼν τριήμερος μὲν ἀνίσταται. . . ."
- 16 Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes* (English edition). 226.; Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes*. 232.: "Κύριον δὲ τῆς δόξης αὐτὸν τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν σταυρωθέντα σαφῶς ὀνομάζει γράφων. . . ."
- 17 Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes* (English edition). 228–29.; Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes*. 234.: "ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν ἐγειρόμενος. . . ."
- 18 Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes* (English edition). 231.; Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Erastianes*. 236.: "Ὁ καὶ πάντα τοὺς νεκροὺς ζωοποιῶν καὶ τὸν ἐκ Μαρίας ἄνθρωπον Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐζωοποίησεν, ὃν ἀνέλιψεν." Although Theodoret attributes this work to Athanasius of

being united to a human being is given in Theodoret's citation of Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium* 3.3.43–44: "...the Lord through whom all things came into being, and with whom nothing that was made exists, raised up to its own height, through the union, the human being that had been united to it."<sup>19</sup> Amphilochius of Iconium is cited as saying: "it was not the divinity that died, but the human being, and the one who raised him is the Word."<sup>20</sup> Also, Chrysostom, referring to Christ after the Resurrection, emphatically says: "and your master led a human being into heaven."<sup>21</sup>

The conclusion to be drawn from the present survey of Theodoret's Christological language in the *Eranistes* is that his mature Christological language remains fundamentally unchanged. While he improved the clarity of the presentation of his ideas (e.g., he was ready to use the term "flesh" (σάρξ) to denote the human nature assumed by the Logos or to allow for a union of natures in one subsistence (ὑπόστασις), with the necessary qualification of denoting the particular in the person),<sup>22</sup> both the imagery and the phraseology from his previous works remain unaffected by the debates with Cyril of Alexandria and are employed alongside new rhetorical techniques and devices in Christological arguments.

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Alexandria, scholarly consensus attributes it to Marcellus of Ancyra (cf. CPG 2.2803; Eduard Schwartz, *Der s. g. Sermo maior de fide des Athanasius*, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften; Philosophisch-Philologische Klasse (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1925). 51ff.; F. Scheidweiler, "Wer ist der Verfasser des sog. *Sermo maior de fide*?", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 47, no. 2 (1954).; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 31. It must be mentioned, however, that Theodoret's attribution of this idea to Athanasius was not entirely ungrounded, for a reference to Christ's humanity in terms of ἄνθρωπος is indeed present in his writings. As F.L. Cross has pointed out, Athanasius uses the expression κυριακός ἄνθρωπος in reference to Christ's humanity in the shorter recension of the *De incarnatione* (cf. Frank L. Cross, *The Study of St. Athanasius: An inaugural lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 1 December 1944* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945). 19.).

19 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 155.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 170.: "...ὁ κύριος, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, καὶ οὗ χωρὶς ὑπέστη τῶν γεγόντων οὐδέν, αὕτη τὸν ἐνωθέντα πρὸς αὐτὴν ἄνθρωπον εἰς τὸ ἴδιον ἀνήγαγεν ὕψος διὰ τῆς ἐνώσεως."

20 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 240.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 243.: "Ἐνεκρώθη δὲ οὐχ ἡ θεότης, ἀλλ' ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ὁ ἐγείρας αὐτὸν ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος..."

21 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 158.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 173.: "...ὁ μὲν δεσπότης σου εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνήγαγεν ἄνθρωπον..."

22 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 44.; *ibid.*, 76.

### 6.3 The Christology of the *Eranistes*

In the *Eranistes* Theodoret conceives of the Incarnation in terms of the salvation of the human race. As in the *Expositio rectae fidei*, the economy of salvation is the sole purpose of the Incarnation. The sin of the Protoplast in paradise could be repaired only by the sacrifice of an equally perfect man. For this reason, the Logos created and assumed a complete human nature, making it his own. The death of this perfect human being that was united to the Logos effected the salvation of the entire race—the debt was paid:

For the whole first man became subject to sin and destroyed the characteristics of the divine image, and the whole race followed its first ancestor; it was therefore out of necessity that the creator, in his desire to renew the image that had been obscured, assumed the whole nature and imprinted in it much better characteristics than the former ones.<sup>23</sup>

As in the *Expositio rectae fidei*, so also in the *Eranistes* one must not conceive of the Incarnation in terms of inhabitation or possession of “a human being” by the Logos; rather, the Logos created for himself a complete human nature which he subsequently inhabited as a “temple.” This effectively prevents the accusation of dividing Christ into two separate persons or teaching of two Sons, which was the charge brought against Nestorius.<sup>24</sup> Theodoret is explicit in saying that the Logos takes on human nature or flesh (σάρξ) while still remaining God: “After becoming human, however, he [Logos] is also seen by angels, according to the divine Apostle [1 Tim 3:16], not in a likeness of glory, but using the true and living cloak (παραπέτασμα) of flesh as though it were a veil (προκαλύμμα).”<sup>25</sup> The imagery of the Logos being clothed with humanity by

23 Ibid., 90.; Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Eranistes*. 113.: “Επειδὴ γὰρ ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ὅλος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐγένετο, καὶ τοὺς τῆς θείας εἰκόνος ἀπώλεσε χαρακτῆρας, ἠκολούθησε δὲ τῷ γενεάρχῃ τὸ γένος· ἀναγκαίως ὁ δημιουργὸς καὶνουργῆσαι τὴν ἁμαυρωθεῖσαν εἰκόνα θελήσας, ὅλην τὴν φύσιν ἀναλαβὼν πολλῶ τῶν προτέρων ἀμείνους ἐνετύπωσε χαρακτῆρας.”

24 Theodoret repeatedly repudiates the separation of the Logos and the human component of Christ into two beings. The Logos exists from eternity, but the humanity of Christ has a beginning in time, which precludes the possibility of union by commingling since the two are separated by the ontological divide between the distinct orders of existence; one nature is uncreated, while the other is created. Cf. Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Eranistes* (*English edition*). 113 and 23.; Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Eranistes*. 134–35 and 43–44.

25 Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Eranistes* (*English edition*). 44.; *ibid.*, 76.: “Μετὰ μέντοι τὴν ἐνανθρώπησιν ὤφθη καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις, κατὰ τὸν θεῖον ἀπόστολον, οὐχ ὁμοιώματι δόξης, ἀλλ’ ἀληθεὶ καὶ ζῶντι χρῆσάμενος, οἷόν τι παραπετάσματι, τῷ τῆς σαρκὸς προκαλύμματι.”



means of the Incarnation is carefully chosen to reflect Theodoret's insistence on the distinctiveness of the divine and human natures after the Incarnation.

The Logos is the creating subject in the Incarnation; He creates the human element of Christ in the Virgin's womb.<sup>26</sup> As in the previous writings, the creation of Christ's human nature is described as "fashioning" (διαπλασθῆναι).<sup>27</sup> As demonstrated earlier, in the *Expositio rectae fidei* 10 Theodoret also teaches that the Logos creates the human nature, the perfect human being, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, having taken on a part of her nature.<sup>28</sup>

In the *Eranistes* Theodoret is clear that the union of the divine nature of the Logos and the human nature takes place at the moment of conception.<sup>29</sup> There is no lapse of time between the creation of the human nature and the beginning of the existence of Christ's humanity.<sup>30</sup> This is an important moment in Theodoret's Christology, because it effectively forestalls arguments for the preexistence of Christ's human nature and the notion that one could confess two natures—divine and human—before the union, but only one (the divine nature) after it:

*Eranistes.* There were two [natures] before the union, but, when they came together, they formed one nature.

*Orthodoxos.* When do you say the union took place?

*Eranistes.* I say right at the moment of the conception.

26 It has become clear from the summary of the *Eranistes* in the previous chapter that throughout the work Theodoret argued for a distinction of the natures and against commingling. His conception of the Incarnation is that the Logos as a personal subject indwells the human nature, which he often styles "the temple," as is typical of the Antiochene milieu. (For a list of references see Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 289.) This teaching is fundamental to Theodoret's Christological system and it is introduced into the dialogue very early on. For example, the Logos is said to have worn the human nature (flesh) as a cloak, and it is said that he was covered in the flesh as in a veil (Dialogue I: 44; *ibid.*, 75.).

27 *Ibid.*, 226.: "... ἐν τῇ μήτρᾳ τῆς παρθένου διαπλασθῆναι..." Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (*English edition*). 219.

28 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 10: "having entered her womb as some divine seed, he creates a temple for himself, the perfect man; having taken some part of her nature, he effected the fashioning of the temple" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 34.: "ταύτης [τῆς Παρθένου] τὴν νηδὺν εἰσδύς οἶονεῖ τις θεῖος σπόρος, πλάττει ναὸν ἐαυτῷ, τὸν τέλειον ἄνθρωπον, μέρος τι λαβὼν τῆς ἐκείνης φύσεως καὶ εἰς τὴν τοῦ ναοῦ διάπλασιν οὐσιώσας").

29 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (*English edition*). 125.; *ibid.*, 145.

30 *Ibid.*, 112.: "... not even a moment of time intervened between the assumption of the flesh and the union. ..." (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 133–34.: "Οὐκοῦν εἰ μὴδὲ τὸ ἀκαριαῖον τοῦ χρόνου τῆς λήψεως τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῆς ἐνώσεως...").



*Orthodoxos.* Do you say that God the Word does not exist before the conception?

*Eranistes.* I say that God the Word exists before time.

*Orthodoxos.* Do you say that the flesh exists with the Word?

*Eranistes.* Definitely not.

*Orthodoxos.* But you say that it was formed by the Holy Spirit after the angel's greeting?

*Eranistes.* I do.

*Orthodoxos.* Then there were not two natures before the union, but one and only one. For if the divinity has a preexistence, and the humanity does not coexist [with it], because it was formed after the angel's greeting, and the union was joined together by the formation, then, before the union there was one nature, the one that always existed and existed before time.<sup>31</sup>

Theodoret's conception of the mechanics of the Incarnation is hinted at in his understanding of the union of soul and body. As demonstrated in the analysis of his early Christology, he believed that the human being was gradually formed during the course of gestation. The body was formed first, and the soul was adjoined only to the fully formed body. The same mechanics of human formation is repeated in the *Eranistes*, where Theodoret, following Ezekiel 37:7–10, argues that souls inhabit only fully formed bodies:

The divine Ezekiel teaches this more clearly. For he shows that God ordered the bones to come together, that each of them recovered its

31 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition), 210–11.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*, 132–33.:

“EPAN. Δύο πρὸ τῆς ἐνώσεως ἦσαν· συνελθοῦσαι δὲ μίαν ἀπετέλεσαν φύσιν.

OPΘ. Πότε δὲ φῆς γεγενῆσθαι τὴν ἕνωσιν;

EPAN. Εὐθὺς ἐγὼ λέγω παρὰ τὴν σύλληψιν.

OPΘ. Τὸν δὲ θεὸν λόγον οὐ προϋπάρχειν τῆς συλλήψεως λέγεις;

EPAN. Πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων εἶναί φημι.

OPΘ. Τὴν δὲ γε σάρκα συνυπάρχειν αὐτῷ;

EPAN. Οὐ δῆτα.

OPΘ. Ἄλλ’ ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου μετὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀγγέλου διαπλασθῆναι πρόσρῃσιν;

EPAN. Οὕτως φημί.

OPΘ. Οὐκοῦν οὐ δύο ἦσαν πρὸ τῆς ἐνώσεως φύσεις, ἀλλὰ μία μόνη. Εἰ γὰρ προϋπάρχει μὲν ἡ θεότης, ἡ δὲ γε ἀνθρωπότης οὐ συνυπάρχει (διεπλάσθη γὰρ μετὰ τὸν ἀγγελικὸν ἀσπασμόν, συνήπται δὲ τῇ διαπλάσει ἡ ἕνωσις), μία ἄρα φύσις πρὸ τῆς ἐνώσεως ἦν, ἡ αἰεὶ οὕσα καὶ πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων οὕσα.”

proper harmony, and that God produced nerves, veins, arteries, the flesh that was woven around them, and the skin that conceals all of them, and then ordered the souls to return to their own bodies.<sup>32</sup>

According to Theodoret's *Eranistes*, the formation of the person of Christ followed a natural course: "he [Christ] was an embryo in the womb; and after his birth he was and was called an infant."<sup>33</sup> In this model, the Logos was the only personal component in the process of Incarnation, since the human nature was completed with the introduction of the reason-endowed soul only after Christ's body was fully formed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. The Logos formed or fashioned the human component of Christ in the womb of the Blessed Virgin; the body was created first and then the reason-endowed soul was added to it to complete the human being. The same understanding of the Incarnation can be found in the *Expositio rectae fidei*.<sup>34</sup>

It must be noted here that in the *Eranistes* Theodoret retained his original dipartite anthropology—the human being consists of the soul and body, and reason is part of the soul: "But divine Scripture knows one soul, not two, and the formation of the first human being clearly teaches us this."<sup>35</sup> This anthropological model is especially evident in Theodoret's analogies for explaining the union of divinity and humanity in Christ, where he compares the Incarnation to the union of "a soul and body" to form one human being.<sup>36</sup>

The union of the divinity and humanity is free of necessity and is an act of good pleasure (εὐδοκία) on the part of the Logos: "[the union] in the case of Christ the Lord it is a matter of good pleasure (εὐδοκίας), of love of humanity,

32 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 215.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 215: "Σαφέστερον ταῦτα διδάσκει ὁ θεῖος Ἰεζεκιήλ. Ἐπιδείκνυσι γάρ ὅπως τε συνελθεῖν τὰ ὁστέα προσέταξεν ὁ θεός, καὶ ὅπως τούτων ἕκαστον τὴν οἰκείαν ἀπέλαβεν ἀρμονίαν, καὶ ἔφυσε νεῦρα καὶ φλέβας καὶ ἀρτηρίας, καὶ τὰς μεταξὺ τούτων ὑπεστρωμένas σάρκας, καὶ τὸ δέρμα τούτων ἀπάντων τὸ κάλυμμα, καὶ τότε τὰς ψυχὰς ἐπανελθεῖν πρὸς τὰ οἰκεία παρηγγύησε σώματα."

33 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 125.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 145.: "...μετὰ τὴν σύλληψιν καὶ ἔμβρυον ἦν ἐν τῇ μήτρᾳ, καὶ τεχθεὶς βρέφος καὶ ἦν καὶ ἐκλήθη..." Also cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 110.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 132.

34 Cf. Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 10 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 34–36.).

35 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 89–90.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 112–13.: "Ἡ δὲ θεία γραφὴ μίαν οἶδεν, οὐ δύο ψυχὰς· καὶ τοῦτο διδάσκει σαφῶς ἡμᾶς ἡ τοῦ πρώτου ἀνθρώπου διάπλασις."

36 Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 189–90.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 199–200.

and of grace.”<sup>37</sup> Such a conception of the union is demanded by logic, since divinity is by definition free from any necessity. Here, Theodoret demonstrates continuity with his thought in the *Expositio rectae fidei* 15, where, as we saw, he argues that the human nature of Christ participates in the dignity of God (θεία ἄξια) not as a part of the divine nature, but solely through the good pleasure (εὐδοκία) of the Logos.<sup>38</sup>

The union of the Logos with the human nature in the person of Christ, however, was by necessity free of commingling; the mutation and change that such a union would entail are incompatible with Godhead. The divine nature is perfect by definition and any change or modification—addition or subtraction—would entail previous imperfection. Therefore, the mode of union of the divine nature of the Logos and the human nature must be free of confusion and commingling. However, the fundamental principle which enabled Theodoret to advance this argument is his keen awareness of the ontological transcendence of the Godhead, which alone belongs to the order of the uncreated existence. The divide between the two orders—uncreated and created—prevents any commingling of the divine and human natures. Theodoret says that it is wicked “... to mix the natures, even though they differ from one another, not simply in the way that the soul differs from the body, but to the extent that the temporal differs from the eternal, and the created from the creator.”<sup>39</sup> At another place he insists that Christ must have both divine and human natures, for otherwise it would have been impossible for him to bridge the ontological gap between God and human beings [cf. 1 Tim 2.5–6], i.e., between the uncreated and created orders of existence to which they respectively belong.<sup>40</sup>

#### 6.4 The Human Nature of Christ after the Resurrection: *Communicatio idiomatum* or *theosis*

As has been demonstrated, throughout the *Eranistes* Theodoret argued that the divine nature remains immutable and unchangeable. However, the human

37 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 116.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 138.: “... [ἡ ἔνωσις] ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ δεσπότου Χριστοῦ τὸ ὅλον εὐδοκίας ἐστὶ, καὶ φιλανθρωπίας καὶ χάριτος.”

38 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 15 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 56.).

39 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 190.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 200.: “... συγχεῖν τὰς φύσεις, εἰ καὶ τὸ διάφορον, οὐχ ὅσον ἔχει ψυχὴ πρὸς σῶμα, ἔχουσι πρὸς ἀλλήλας, ἀλλὰ τοσούτον, ὅσον τὸ πρόσφατον τοῦ αἰδίου διέστηκε, καὶ τὸ ποιηθὲν τοῦ ποιήσαντος.”

40 Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 105.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 127.

nature of Christ is said to have acquired extraordinary properties not proper to a human nature.<sup>41</sup> Theodoret explicitly affirms that, despite this change, it was not changed into the nature of the Godhead, but remains human. He affirms that Christ's body was "seen as finite, with hands, feet, and other bodily limbs; it could be touched and seen and had the wounds and scars that it had before the resurrection."<sup>42</sup> Naturally, such bodily imperfections and limitations do not pertain to the divine nature. Further, the changes in Christ's human nature affect only the accidental attributes (συμβεβηκός) of the humanity and do not change the nature:

*Orthodoxos.* Whether body is sick or healthy, we still call it a body.

*Eranistes.* We do.

*Orthodoxos.* Why?

*Eranistes.* Because they both share the same substance.

*Orthodoxos.* And yet we see a tremendous difference between them. For one is healthy, sound, and free of misery, while the other has the eye torn out, the limb broken, or some other very grievous affliction.

*Eranistes.* But good health and sickness both affect the same nature.

*Orthodoxos.* Then surely the body should be called a substance, and sickness and good health should be called accidental attributes.<sup>43</sup>

41 There are no fewer than twenty-five references to this concept in the *Eranistes*, which testifies to the fact that this concept played an important role in Theodoret's Christological system. Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 105, 109, 126, 128, 138, 144, 150–51, 153, 156, 158, 159 (3×), 160 (2×), 161 (2×), 163, 172, 260, 263.

42 Ibid., 128 and 260.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 148 and 260.: "μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τροφῆς μετέλαβεν ὁ δεσπότης, καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἔδειξε καὶ τοὺς πόδας τοῖς μαθηταῖς, καὶ τὰς ἐν τούτοις διατρήσεις τῶν ἡλων, καὶ μέντοι γε καὶ τὴν πλευρὰν καὶ τὴν ἐν αὐτῇ γεγενημένην ἐκ τῆς πληγῆς ὠτειλὴν . . . μεμένηκεν ἄρα καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἡ τοῦ σώματος φύσις, καὶ εἰς ἐτέραν οὐσίαν οὐ μετεβλήθη." And "... μὴν μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν περιγεγραμμένον ὥφθη, καὶ χεῖρας ἔχον καὶ πόδας, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τοῦ σώματος μόρια· καὶ ἀπτὸν ἦν καὶ ὁρατὸν, καὶ διατρήσεις ἔχον καὶ ὠτειλάς, ὥσπερ εἶχε πρὸ τῆς ἀναστάσεως."

43 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 128–29.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 148–49.

"ΟΡΘ. Οὐκοῦν μένει μὲν ἡ φύσις, μεταβάλλεται δὲ αὐτῆς τὸ φθαρτὸν εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν, καὶ τὸ θνητὸν εἰς ἀθανασία. Σκοπήσωμεν δὲ οὕτως· τὸ ἀσθενοῦν σῶμα καὶ τὸ ὑγιαῖνον σῶμα καλοῦμεν ὁμοίως.

ΕΡΑΝ. Ναιχί.

ΟΡΘ. Διατί;

ΕΡΑΝ. Ἐπειδὴ μετέχει τῆς αὐτῆς οὐσίας τὰ ἀμφοτέρω.

ΟΡΘ. Καὶ μὴν πλείστην ἐν αὐτοῖς ὁρῶμεν διαφοράν. Τὸ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὑγιές τε καὶ ἄρτιον καὶ ἀπήμαντον· τὸ δὲ ἡ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν ἐκκεκομμένον, ἡ τὸ σκέλος ἔχει πεπληγμένον, ἡ ἄλλο τι πάθος πασχάλεπον.

Thus, according to Theodoret, the fact that Christ had a body after the resurrection is sufficient proof that his humanity was not changed into divinity: “And so the Lord’s body rose incorruptible, incapable of suffering, immortal, glorified with the divine glory, and is adorned by the heavenly powers; but it is still a body as finite as it was before.”<sup>44</sup> Naturally, this finality or limitation (περιγραφή) is ontologically irreconcilable with the infinity of the divine nature.

Theodoret makes clear that the body of the resurrected Christ is the model of the resurrected bodies of all humans.<sup>45</sup> He envisions the eschatological existence of all humanity in terms of the resurrected Christ, i.e., the bodies of saints will not be transfigured into the nature of the Godhead but will remain human, while the accidental attributes of their nature will be changed: “It is according to the same quality (τὸ ποιόν), therefore, and not according to immensity (τὸ ποσόν) that the bodies of holy people will be made into the same form as the Lord’s body.”<sup>46</sup> The bodies of holy men and women will share in Christ’s incorruptibility and even in his immortality, though they will not be his equals: “They will share in his glory . . . but there is a great difference to be found in its [glorification] immensity, as vast as that between the sun and the stars, or rather between master and servants, and between that which gives light and that which is illuminated.”<sup>47</sup> Thus, their communion with God will not be in terms of becoming “gods” by nature, but in terms of participation in the divine nature by grace.<sup>48</sup> This reference is highly reminiscent of his

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EPAN. Ἀλλὰ περὶ τὴν αὐτὴν φύσιν ἐκάτερον γίνεται, καὶ ἡ ὑγεία καὶ ἡ ἀσθένεια.

ΟΡΘ. Οὐκοῦν τὸ σῶμα οὐσίαν κλητέον, καὶ τὴν νόσον καὶ τὴν ὑγείαν συμβεβηκός.”

44 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 129.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 149.: “Καὶ τὸ δεσποτικὸν τοιγαροῦν σῶμα ἀφθαρτον μὲν ἀνέστη, καὶ ἀπαθὲς καὶ ἀθάνατον καὶ τῇ θεΐᾳ δόξῃ δεδοξασμένον, καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἐπουρανίων προσκυνεῖται δυνάμεων· σῶμα δὲ ὁμῶς ἐστὶ τὴν προτέραν ἔχον περιγραφὴν.”

45 Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 128 and 131; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 148 and 151.

46 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 131.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 151.: “Κατὰ τὸ ποιὸν τοίνυν, οὐ κατὰ τὸ ποσόν, σύμμορφα ἔσται τῷ δεσποτικῷ σώματι τῶν ἁγίων τὰ σώματα.”

47 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 131.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 151.: “Ἐν δέ γε τῇ ποσότητι πολὺ τὸ διάφορον ἔστιν εὐρεῖν, καὶ τοσοῦτον, ὅσον ἡλίου πρὸς ἀστέρας, μᾶλλον δὲ ὅσον δεσπότου πρὸς δούλους, καὶ τοῦ φωτίζοντος πρὸς τὸ φωτιζόμενον.”

48 J. Gross noted in Theodoret the idea that human beings can be called “gods” because they are created in God’s image, they exercise the power to create (although not *ex nihilo*) and are endowed with reason (νοῦς) (Jules Gross, *The Divinization of the Christian According to*

discussion of the ubiquity of the Logos after Incarnation in the *Expositio rectae fidei* 15, where he argues that the Logos was present by substance (κατ'οὐσίαν) in his body. Christ's body is said to share in the dignity of God (θεία ἀξία) but not to be part of the divine nature.<sup>49</sup> In the *Expositio* 17, Theodoret qualifies this idea, arguing that the divine substance is not equally present in Christ and in the rest of creation. In the *Expositio*, Theodoret uses the image of light, comparing the presence of the Logos in the body of Christ to the shining of the Sun upon everyone equally, while only those with healthy eyesight would be able to fully appreciate and benefit from it.<sup>50</sup> In the *Eranistes*, Theodoret likewise makes a distinction between the glorification of Christ's body and the bodies of the saints, saying that the difference will be "as vast as that between the sun and the stars . . . and between that which gives light and that which is illuminated."<sup>51</sup>

Theodoret does not stand alone among the Antiochene teachers in this concept. As N. Russell noted, while the Antiochenes did not use the term "theosis" (divinization), they never repudiated the idea, which was found in the Irenaeus corpus and was undoubtedly known to them.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, before Theodoret, the idea is found in both John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Chrysostom says that the title "gods" used in Ps 82:6 ("You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you . . .") refers to the baptized. However, this must be understood only in the titular sense.<sup>53</sup> Accepting Chrysostom's understanding of the verse, Theodore of Mopsuestia added that this title would be

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*the Greek Fathers*, trans. Paul A. Onica (Anaheim, CA: A&C Press, 2002). 214.). This teaching appears in Theodoret's *Question 20 in Genesis* and *Question 9 in Exodus*, which belong to the mature period of his theological output; they were written a few years after the *Eranistes*. This idea of human beings sharing in the dignity of God, but not by nature, appears to be complementary to his understanding of the state of the risen human nature.

49 Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 15 (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Expositio rectae fidei*. 56.).

50 Cf. Theodoret, *Expositio rectae fidei* 17 (ibid., 64.).

51 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 131.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 151.: "ὅσον ἡλίου πρὸς ἀστέρας . . . καὶ τοῦ φωτίζοντος πρὸς τὸ φωτιζόμενον."

52 Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). 237. There is no doubt that Theodoret was well acquainted with the works of Irenaeus of Lyons, since in the *Eranistes* his works are quoted no fewer than sixteen times (Dialogue I—seven times; Dialogue II—six times; Dialogue III—three times). Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 10, 13, 19.

53 John Chrysostom, *Homily on John* 3.2, 14.2; Cf. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*. 237.

realized only after the final resurrection.<sup>54</sup> Interestingly, Theodore says that our human nature will receive divine attributes of immortality and immutability.<sup>55</sup> The same is evident in Theodoret's thought, both in the period prior to the Nestorian controversy (e.g., *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas* 7)<sup>56</sup> and in the mature period of his Christological output, as argued here.

Therefore, Theodoret's conception of the interaction of the divine and human natures of Christ as the exchange of attributes of the natures (i.e., *Communicatio idiomatum*) had not changed from the one adduced previously in the discussion of the *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas*.

The final question relating to the *Communicatio idiomatum* in Theodoret's Christology is not whether he accepted it, which evidently he did, but rather when it is thought to occur. This seems to be the main point of contention between Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Cyril of Alexandria.

Cyril believed that the exchange of attributes of the two natures takes place from the moment of conception. Pusey argued, however, that in this matter Cyril put an emphasis on the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him.<sup>57</sup> Pusey believes that Cyril, being aware of the Adoptionist and Arian interpretations of the event, argued that by undergoing baptism Christ "inaugurated an ongoing state of affairs, one which has great significance for the human race." He also adds: "the Son receives the Holy Spirit "as man" for our sake, according to the economy."<sup>58</sup> Thus, according to Cyril, the baptism in the Jordan and the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus was not necessary for Christ who was God the Logos and whose human nature has been divinized in the union. It was rather an act of condescension for the benefit of the human race so that it might comprehend the significance of Jesus's mission.

Theodoret, however, argues that Christ's humanity remains complete and unchanged until the resurrection, which marks the moment of the *theosis* of human nature and thus inaugurates the full exchange of the attributes. As seen earlier, Theodoret insists on the distinctiveness of the properties of natures throughout Christ's life on earth. However, after the resurrection the human

54 Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catechetical Homilies* 3.11, 4.10, 11.8, 14.24. Cf. Ibid.

55 Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catechetical Homilies* 5.20, 11.7, 14.24. Cf. Ibid.

56 Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 181.

57 Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, *Sancti Patri nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini In divi Joannis evangelium; Accedunt fragmenta varia necnon tractatus ad Tiberium diaconum duo*, ed. Philip E. Pusey, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1872). 174–75.

58 Cyril of Alexandria, *In Joannem* 14:20 in *ibid.* Cf. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*. 153.



nature that alone is susceptible to change receives certain properties of the divine nature.

For Theodoret, Christ's resurrection is the turning point in the existence of the person of Christ, the moment which marks the beginning of the exchange of attributes. The reason for this chronological marker is simple: as previously mentioned, Theodoret's concept of Incarnation is defined by its purpose—the salvation of the human race. The sole purpose of the Logos's Incarnation is the repayment of the debt of the Protoplast and the human race which followed in his fall. The sacrifice of an equally perfect human being was required to restore the fallen human race. Thus, it was necessary that Christ be a complete and perfect human being in order to accomplish that mission. Once the mission was completed by the death on the cross and the resurrection, it was no longer necessary for the human nature to retain all of its attributes, and the time had come for it to receive its due glory: it began sharing in the attributes of the divine nature. Evidently, Theodoret's thought on this point was utilitarian.

It must remain beyond the scope of this work to venture into the debate about the correctness of Theodoret's and Cyril's theories. For the purposes of this work it suffices to note that Theodoret's position remained remarkably consistent throughout the entire period of his theological productivity. The idea that the human body of Christ receives properties extraordinary to the human nature only after the resurrection, even though it had been united to the divine nature from the moment of conception, i.e., from the beginning of its existence, is present unwaveringly throughout Theodoret's life.

## 6.5 Iconic Theophanies: An Echo of the Anthropomorphite Controversy?

In the *Eranistes*, Theodoret used the concept of the vision of resurrected Christ as proof that after resurrection human nature does not change into the nature of divinity. The fact that Christ will come in the same way as he was seen to ascend implies that Christ's human nature was still present, for Godhead is invisible: "I have also learned from the holy angels that he will come in the same way that the disciples saw him going to heaven (cf. Acts 1:11)... And I know that what human beings see is finite, for the infinite nature is invisible."<sup>59</sup>

59 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 129.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 149.: "Μεμάθηκα δὲ καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων, ὅτι οὕτως ἐλεύσεται ὃν τρόπον αὐτὸν εἶδον οἱ μαθηταὶ πορευόμενον εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν. Εἶδον δὲ περιγεγραμμένην φύσιν, οὐκ ἀπερίγραφον... Καὶ οἶδα περιγεγραμμένον τὸ ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων ὁρώμενον. Ἀθέατος γὰρ ἡ ἀπερίγραφος φύσις."



In order to avoid suggesting that there were any limitations on the divine nature, Theodoret even argued that the theophanies in the Old Testament are not full experiences of God, but merely visions He created so that finite human nature could come into contact with Him: “The prophet (cf. Isaiah 6:2 LXX) didn’t see the actual substance of God, but a kind of vision adapted to his capability. After the Resurrection, however, all will see the judge’s [i.e., Christ’s] visible (ὁρωμένη) nature.”<sup>60</sup> Therefore, the substance of God remains inaccessible both in the present life and in the eschaton. Even the theophanies fall short of truly revealing the transcendent God, since the substance of Godhead remains hidden behind iconic apparitions. According to Theodoret, the theophanies are mere images and apparitions which are created for the benefit of the human beings so that they could come into contact with the divine. And yet Christ will be seen even in the eschaton, which implies that he retained the only nature of his constitution that is perceptible—the human one.

A problem in Theodoret’s understanding of the partial transformation of the properties of Christ’s human nature is his continuous existence in heaven. Arguing from the Scriptures (Phil 3:20–21), Theodoret claims that the reference to Christ’s “body” even after the Ascension signifies the continuous existence of his human nature in heaven:

But I shall nevertheless show that the Lord’s body is called a body even after the assumption. Hear, then, the apostle who teaches, ‘For our society is in heaven, from which we also receive a savior, Lord Jesus, who will transform the body of our lowliness, to be made itself into the same form as the body of his glory.’ It was not, therefore, transformed into another nature, but remained a body, even though it was filled with divine glory and emitted rays of light; and the bodies of holy people will be made into the same form as it.<sup>61</sup>

60 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 130.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 150.: “Οὐκ αὐτὴν εἶδεν ὁ προφήτης τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν οὐσίαν, ἀλλ’ ὅψιν τινὰ τῇ αὐτοῦ δυνάμει συμβαίνουσαν. Μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἅπαντες αὐτὴν τοῦ κριτοῦ τὴν ὁρωμένην ὄψονται φύσιν.”

61 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 131.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 150.: “δείξω δὲ ὅμως καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάληψιν σῶμα καλούμενον τοῦ δεσπότη τοῦ σώματος. Ἀκούσον τοίνυν τοῦ ἀποστόλου διδάσκοντος: Ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, ἐξ οὗ καὶ σωτὴρα ἀπεκδεχόμεθα κύριον Ἰησοῦν, ὃς μετασχηματίζει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν, εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι αὐτὸ σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης ἡμῶν, εἰς ἑτέραν μεταβέβληται φύσιν, ἀλλὰ μεμέννηκε σῶμα, θείας μέντοι δόξης πεπληρωμένον καὶ φωτὸς ἐκπέμπον ἀκτίνας· ἐκείνῳ τὰ τῶν ἁγίων σώματα γενήσεται σύμμορφα.”

Although Theodoret argued that the bodies of saints will undergo the same transformation as the body of Christ, as we have seen in the previous section he made one important distinction between Christ's body and the body of the saints; namely, the transformation of Christ's body and that of the bodies of saints will differ qualitatively: "It is according to the same quality (τὸ ποιόν), therefore, and not according to immensity (τὸ ποσόν) that the bodies of holy people will be made into the same form as the Lord's body."<sup>62</sup> These ideas evoke the anthropomorphic controversy popular in the Egyptian monastic milieu. The debate belonged to the generation prior to Theodoret but it nonetheless showed surprising resilience, surviving until his time despite the best efforts of the all-powerful Alexandrian bishops to quash it. As A. Golitzin has argued convincingly, Cyril of Alexandria dedicated several of his letters to suppressing this teaching.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the writing of the *Eranistes* falls within the general time-frame of the anthropomorphic controversy. Moreover, Theodoret's insistence on the 'iconic' nature of the Old Testament theophanies indicates his keen concern for safeguarding the transcendence of the divine nature against any association of Godhead with a "body," since any notion of the perceptibility of the Godhead by human beings (albeit saints) would imply a certain limitation of the divine nature. Theodoret's teaching about the qualitative inequality between the transformation of the risen Christ's body and that of the saints further suggests that he was attempting to avoid charges of supporting anthropomorphism. Theodoret subtly hinted at his intention when he explained that the Old Testament theophanies (e.g., Exodus 7:1) present reality only symbolically. In order to illustrate his point, Theodoret used the analogy of differentiating between the emperor and his images:

*Orthodoxos.* You apparently don't call the imperial images images of the emperor?

*Eranistes.* I certainly do.

*Orthodoxos.* And yet they do not have everything the original has. For in the first place they lack both soul and reason. Second, they have no internal organs, such as heart, stomach, liver, and the other attached to them. Third, they have the form of the senses, but not their actual

62 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 131.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 151.: "Κατὰ τὸ ποιὸν τοίνυν, οὐ κατὰ τὸ ποσόν, σύμμορφα ἔσται τῷ δεσποτικῷ σώματι τῶν ἁγίων τὰ σώματα."

63 Alexander Golitzin, "'The Demons Suggest an Illusion of God's Glory in a Form': Controversy over the Divine Body and Vision of Glory in Some Late Fourth, Early Fifth Century Monastic Literature," *Studia Monastica* 44, no. 1 (2002): 31, note 56.

powers; for they do not fear, speak, or see, and they do not write, walk, or perform other human activities. But they are nevertheless called imperial images.<sup>64</sup>

This same analogy appears in a fifth-century Coptic text representative of the anthropomorphite controversy, *The Life of Apa Aphou of Pemdje*.<sup>65</sup> In the text Apa Aphou, an Egyptian hermit, pays a visit to Archbishop Theophilus of Alexandria (uncle of Cyril of Alexandria) to correct his teaching that the *imago dei* was lost in human beings after the fall. In arguing with the archbishop, the hermit invokes Genesis 1:26 and 9:6 (“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image”), then appeals to the sacrament of the Eucharist, implying that it is the true “body of God.” Finally, he asks:

As for the Glory of the Greatness of God, which it is impossible for anyone to see because of its incomprehensible light, and as for human weakness and imperfection . . . we think that it is like a king who orders the making of an image which everyone is to acknowledge as the image of the king.

Yet everyone [also] knows perfectly well that it [= the image] is only [made] of wood together with other elements . . . but . . . the king has said, “This is my image” . . .

How much the more so, then, with man?<sup>66</sup>

64 Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes* (English edition). 99.; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Eranistes*. 122.: “ΟΠΘ. Ὡς ἔοικε, τὰς βασιλικὰς εἰκόνας οὐ καλεῖς βασιλέως εἰκόνας; EPAN. Πάνυγε.

ΟΠΘ. Καὶ μὴν οὐ πάντα ἔχουσιν, ὅσαπερ τὸ ἀρχέτυπον ἔχει. Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ εἰσιν ἄψυχοί τε καὶ ἄλογοι· εἶτα τῶν ἐντὸς μορίων ἐστέρηνται, καρδίας, φημί, καὶ κοιλίας καὶ ἥπατος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅποσα τούτοις συνέζευκται. Ἐπειτα τὸ μὲν τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἔχουσιν εἶδος, τὰς δὲ τούτων ἐνεργείας οὐκέτι. Οὐτε γὰρ ἐπαΐουσιν, οὐτε φθέγγονται, οὐτε ὁρώσιν· οὐ γράφουσιν, οὐ βαδίζουσιν, οὐκ ἄλλο τι δρῶσι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων· ἀλλ’ ὅμως εἰκόνες καλοῦνται βασιλικαί.”

65 French translation by E. Drioton published in *Revue de l’orient chrétien* 20. Cf. Étienne Drioton, “La discussion d’un moine anthropomorphite audien avec le patriarche Théophile d’Alexandrie (part 1),” *Revue de l’orient chrétienne* 20 (1915–1917): 113–28.; Golitzin, “The Demons Suggest an Illusion of God’s Glory in a Form’: Controversy over the Divine Body and Vision of Glory in Some Late Fourth, Early Fifth Century Monastic Literature,” 23–24.

66 Cited from Golitzin, “The Demons Suggest an Illusion of God’s Glory in a Form’: Controversy over the Divine Body and Vision of Glory in Some Late Fourth, Early Fifth Century Monastic Literature,” 24–25.

As É. Drioton and A. Golitzin have argued, the reference to the “Glory of the Greatness of God” is a reference to a divine body “clothed with incomprehensible light,” in which the hermit believed.<sup>67</sup> As A. Golitzin concluded, Apa Aphou identifies:

... a divine body of light at once with the human form of the *kevod* YHWH in the Biblical theophanies and with the image (*tselem*) and likeness (*demut*) of God in Genesis 1:26; second, the equation of both the *kavod* and the original divine likeness, *demut*, with the “Man from Heaven”, to cite 1 Cor 15:47 and 49, i.e., with the Second Person of the Christian Trinity; and 3) both of the above as linked to, or functionally identical with, the “living bread come down from heaven” of Jn 6:51, the food of the Eucharist.<sup>68</sup>

The scholarly consensus is that all these identifications are indicative of the anthropomorphite debates.<sup>69</sup> The emphasis on the limitlessness of the divine nature, coupled with the argument that divine transcendence goes beyond invisibility due to the divine luminosity, indicates anthropomorphite concerns in Theodoret’s mature Christological thought. Moreover, bearing in mind the fact that anthropomorphism was still plaguing the Alexandrian milieu at the time of Cyril, one ought not be surprised that Theodoret included such an embarrassing episode for the opposite camp in the *Eranistes*, whose purpose was to cast a stain on the Ephesine party. Subtly hinting at such an indiscretion

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67 Drioton, “La discussion d’un moine anthropomorphite audien avec le patriarche Théophile d’Alexandrie (part 1),” 127.; Golitzin, “‘The Demons Suggest an Illusion of God’s Glory in a Form’: Controversy over the Divine Body and Vision of Glory in Some Late Fourth, Early Fifth Century Monastic Literature,” 25.

68 Golitzin, “‘The Demons Suggest an Illusion of God’s Glory in a Form’: Controversy over the Divine Body and Vision of Glory in Some Late Fourth, Early Fifth Century Monastic Literature,” 25–26.

69 Drioton, “La discussion d’un moine anthropomorphite audien avec le patriarche Théophile d’Alexandrie (part 1),” 92–94.; George Florovsky, “Theophilus of Alexandria and Apa Aphou of Pemdje,” in *The Collected Works of Father Georges Florovsky* (Belmont, MA: Nordland, 1975), 99–101 and 117–18; Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 50–51 and 59–64.; Graham Gould, “The Image of God and the Anthropomorphite Controversy in Fourth Century Monasticism,” in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. Brian E. Daley (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 549–50.; Golitzin, “‘The Demons Suggest an Illusion of God’s Glory in a Form’: Controversy over the Divine Body and Vision of Glory in Some Late Fourth, Early Fifth Century Monastic Literature,” 23–24.

could well serve his ultimate objective of underscoring the superiority of his Christological system, which, due to its insistence on the ontological distinction between the uncreated and created orders, was intrinsically free from such a theological impropriety as the anthropomorphism of God.

## 6.6 Conclusion

This final section has presented the mature Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus as evidenced in his latest major work on the subject, the *Eranistes*. The section began by analyzing the Christological terminology at the mature stage of his thought. The results of the analysis show that his keywords during the Nestorian debates—substance, nature, subsistence, person—retain identical meaning in his mature Christology. One of the most fundamental concepts of Theodoret's theology is the distinction between the common and the particular in God *qua* Trinity and Christ *qua* Incarnate Logos. These distinctions are crucial for a full understanding of his Christological system, which makes an attempt at explaining the union of the divinity and humanity in Christ in such a way as to make a link between the purpose of Christ's Incarnation for which the divine nature was necessary (i.e., the salvation of the human race), and the presence of involuntary passions in Christ's human nature (e.g., hunger, thirst, fatigue, etc.) that is part of the Scriptural evidence of him. In the *Eranistes*, Theodoret carefully and consistently used the terms substance (οὐσία) and nature (φύσις) to designate the shared underlying principle in beings, while the terms person (πρόσωπον) and subsistence (ὑπόστασις) consistently denoted particular attributes. However, person and subsistence are not fully synonymous, for the former is broader and incorporates various aspects of the being to form one personal entity, e.g., substance (οὐσία), subsistence (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως/ὑπόστασις), individual characteristics (ιδιότης), power (ἐνέργεια), etc.

In order to explain his Christology, Theodoret used in the *Eranistes* a phraseology that involved using the term human being (ἄνθρωπος) for the assumed human component in Christ. The use of this term was frowned upon after Cyril's victorious exchange with Nestorius. In many circles it involved the danger of possible association with the Nestorius's alleged doctrines (i.e., the teaching of two Sons: the Logos and the assumed/adopted human being). Theodoret nonetheless did not hesitate to use the term ἄνθρωπος for the human nature of Christ. In the *Eranistes*, it was used alongside the impersonal term flesh (σάρξ). However, it seems that the former term served to emphasize the continued existence of Christ's human nature after the Incarnation.

Both Theodoret's Christological language evidenced in the *Eranistes* and his choice of patristic citations in providing support for his teachings leave no doubt that he continued using phraseology from the period preceding the Nestorian controversy even at the dawn of the Council of Chalcedon. This ought not surprise us, because, as P. Barkliff showed, by the time of the composition of the *Eranistes*, the use of the term ἄνθρωπος to denote Christ's human nature and the phrase "assumed man" to describe the union of the Logos with the humanity in Christ were tolerable in the Latin West.<sup>70</sup> This is evident from the *Tome* of Pope Leo the Great, whose faith the Council of Chalcedon likens to that of the apostle Peter.<sup>71</sup> A few years after the Council, Leo emphatically referred to Christ's humanity as "homo assumptus" in the Sermon 28:

The man, therefore, assumed into the Son of God, was in such wise received into the unity of Christ's Person from His very commencement in the body, that without the Godhead He was not conceived, without the Godhead He was not brought forth, without the Godhead He was not nursed. It was the same Person in the wondrous acts, and in the endurance of insults; through His human weakness crucified, dead and buried: through His Divine power, being raised the third day, He ascended to the heavens, sat down at the right hand of the Father, and in His nature as man received from the Father that which in His nature as God He Himself also gave.<sup>72</sup>

70 Barkliff argues that a shift from the Alexandrine to Antiochene Christological vocabulary is evident in the literary output of Leo the Great later in his pontificate, possibly due to influence of Prosper of Aquitaine, which points to the fact that the general theological atmosphere was conducive to the Antiochene Christological vocabulary in the Latin West. Cf. Philip L. Barkliff, "The Shifting Tones of Pope Leo the Great's Christological Vocabulary," *Church History* 66, no. 2 (1997): 226–7.

71 *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: General Introduction, Documents before the Council, Session I*, 24.

72 Sermo 28:6 (NPNF<sup>2</sup> 12: 143–44): "Adsumptus igitur homo in Filium Dei, sic in unitatem personae Christi ab ipsis corporalibus est receptus exordiis, ut nec sine deitate conceptus sit, nec sine deitate editus, nec sine deitate nutritus. Idem erat in miraculis, idem ubi contumeliis; per humanam infirmitatem crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus, per diuinam uirtutem die tertia resuscitatus, ascendit ad caelos, consedit ad dexteram Patris, et in natura hominis a Patre accepit quod in natura Deitatis etiam ipse donauit" (Leo the Great, *Sancti Leonis Magni Romani Pontificis Tractatus Septem et Nonaginta*, ed. Antonius Chavassee, vol. 138, Corpus Christianorum series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1973).) As P. Barkliff has argued convincingly, even after the Council of Chalcedon Pope Leo continued using the phrase in his writings whenever an emphasis on Christ's humanity was necessary

The mature Christology of Theodoret is marked by his concept of Incarnation, which is defined by its purpose; namely, the only reason the Logos became incarnate was the restoration of the human race to the prelapsarian state. As previously mentioned, this necessitated the existence of both divinity and humanity in the Savior, so that the ontological gap between God and the fallen human race could be bridged. Theodoret provided this bridge by arguing that the Logos descended and created Christ's human nature in the womb of the Virgin. The Logos created the humanity of Christ in a natural manner, i.e., in the womb the embryo of Christ underwent the entire natural process of human gestation. As previously seen, Theodoret's understanding of this process was that first the human body grew in the womb, and only once it was fully formed was the reason-endowed soul added to it. This means that at the moment of conception (i.e., the beginning of existence) the human element of Christ was impersonal. Moreover, Theodoret believed that the union of the Logos with the human nature took place at the moment of conception and that Christ's human component did not exist on its own before the union with the divine nature. Thus, the subject of the Incarnation was the creating Logos, who was the only personal entity at the moment of conception.

In conclusion, Theodoret's understanding of the union of the divine and human natures in Christ as presented in the *Eranistes* shows a keen awareness of the ontological divide between the uncreated and created orders of existence—between the divine and human natures—which effectively prevents a union in which the divine nature of the Logos might be suspected of being changed on the level of substance/nature. The natures were united into one personal entity to create an individual—Jesus Christ. However, the transcendence of the Logos even after the union is strictly upheld throughout the *Eranistes* to such an extent that Theodoret makes subtle allusions to the anthropomorphite controversy in order to argue his point that the divine substance/nature is utterly incommunicable. As such, the divine nature is immutable and by necessity remains unmixed in the union of the Incarnation. Thus in order to avoid confusion, one must refrain from attributing properties of the human nature to the divine. However, due to the transformation effected by the resurrection, certain properties of Christ's divine nature can be predicated of the human nature. Since Christ is the first fruit and first-born from the dead (cf. 1 Cor 15:20 and Col 1:18), the entire human race will be similarly transformed through the general resurrection. There is just one important qualitative difference: the glorified saints will not participate in the divine glory by nature, as Christ *qua* incarnate Logos does, but by grace.

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(e.g., *Letter 124* to Palestinian monks in PL 54. 1064–65); cf. Barkliff, “The Shifting Tones of Pope Leo the Great's Christological Vocabulary,” 230–32.



## General Conclusions: The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus—Development or Continuity?

It would be ironic if it turned out that the Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus was susceptible to mutation and change, for he vehemently insisted upon and greatly cherished the concept of immutability in his theological system. It is my hope, however, that in the course of this work I have proven that his Christology does indeed remain unchanged. The analysis of his early and mature Christological output shows that the main theological concepts and terminology remain unaffected by the many years of fierce debates.

Theodoret's Christology was constructed around the key concept of a sharp distinction between the uncreated and created orders of existence. The ontological chasm between the two orders necessitated that the union of the (uncreated) divine and (created) human natures cannot take place on the level of substance (οὐσία) or nature (φύσις). It could only take place on the level of personal existence (πρόσωπον). However, Theodoret's concept of the person (πρόσωπον) is composite; it incorporates substance, subsistence, activities, etc. Thus, his insistence on the union of the natures on the level of person (πρόσωπον) does not necessarily involve the existence of two subsistences in Christ, since, as has been argued, the Logos was the only personal presence at the moment of the Incarnation.

The astute student of the Christological controversies may notice that at the beginning of the Nestorian controversy Theodoret viewed with suspicion Cyril's proposition in the *Twelve Anathemas* that the divinity and humanity were united in a union of subsistence (ὑπόστασις). In the *Eranistes* this hesitation vanished and the union of the natures in one subsistence is accepted. However, the initial hesitation to accept Cyril's formulation of the union of the natures on the level of subsistence (ὑποστατική ἔνωσις) which is evident in the *Refutation of the Twelve Anathemas* ought not be understood as a rejection based on theological persuasion, but must be considered in the context of debate with Cyril. As previously argued, Cyril frequently made the expression ὑποστατική ἔνωσις synonymous with ἔνωσις φυσική, thus confusing the terms for “common” and “particular” as used by Theodoret in his theological vocabulary. In his Christological writings Theodoret consistently employed a technical terminology which he inherited from the authoritative Cappadocian milieu: substance (οὐσία) and nature (φύσις) signified the “common,” while person



(πρόσωπον) and subsistence (ὑπόστασις) signified the “particular” in a concept. However, the two terms for the “particular” had a different dimension, since subsistence signified the individual characteristics of a person and thus was also a constituent part of the person. Therefore, the fact that Theodoret never rejected the formulation ὑποστατική ἔνωσις in his early Christological writings and never accepted Cyril’s ἔνωσις φυσική in the mature period leads to the conclusion that his acceptance of the former in the *Eranistes* ought not be interpreted as a change in his Christological terminology or teaching.

For Theodoret, it was logically impossible to ascribe involuntary passions to the divine Logos. The subject of all attributions is the person of Christ, i.e., the incarnate Logos. Thus, for him the Logos *qua* God, because of his divine nature that alone belongs to the uncreated order of existence, must have remained immutable in the union with created human nature. Once Theodoret applied the principle of immutability to the incarnate Logos, it followed that the union of the natures occurred without mixture or commingling. The pure and perfect divine nature does not make up compounds, for compositeness implies the possibility of dissolution and thus the imperfection of existence/being. Yet it must be noted that Theodoret’s Christology was not the result of abstract philosophical or theological meditations; his purpose was to make sense of theological mysteries, insofar as a human being was able to do so. In creating his theological system, he made use of various areas of human knowledge, e.g., philosophy, anthropology, medicine, etc.

Theodoret’s Christology was defined by his understanding of the purpose of the Incarnation. For him, the purpose of the Incarnation of the Logos was to save the human race by restoring it to the prelapsarian state. In order to accomplish this, the Savior had to be concurrently both God and a perfect human being. However, the divine and human natures are precluded from entering into a union by their respective orders of existence. Yet the Scriptural evidence shows that they did indeed unite in Jesus Christ. Theodoret solved this dilemma by arguing that in the Incarnation the Logos as a personal entity created Christ’s human nature by uniting it to himself. As previously mentioned, for the purposes of the economy of salvation, Christ had to be a perfect human being, complete in every sense and equal to us, but sinless. Thus, Theodoret argued, the creation of the human nature of Christ had to follow the natural process; Christ’s body was created in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, and after it was fully formed it received a reason-endowed soul which completed Christ’s human nature. This model of Incarnation necessitates the existence of only one personal entity—that of the Logos—at the moment of the union of divinity and humanity, since initially Christ’s human nature was soulless and thus incomplete. This is why the Logos can be said to be the ultimate subject of

all attributions, for Jesus Christ is the Logos-incarnate. However, properly speaking, all attributions belong to the “person” of Jesus Christ. After Christ accomplished his salvific mission through the Resurrection, his human nature underwent a certain transformation. Christ’s humanity is shown to possess certain attributes of the divine nature, e.g., it is not limited by space or time. Yet the change does not necessitate a change into divinity. This is evident from the Scriptural evidence that Christ had a body even after the Resurrection. Introducing a body into the divine nature would imply the limitation of the Godhead, which is a logical impossibility. Nonetheless, the transformation of the human nature after the Resurrection marks an important moment in Theodoret’s Christology; namely, before the Resurrection the attributions of both natures were proper to the Logos-incarnate (i.e., the person of Jesus Christ), while after they were proper to the Logos, since the limitations and involuntary passions of the human nature had been obliterated.

As argued here, it is evident that Theodoret’s Christology could never be characterized as “Nestorian” at any point in his theological productivity. Conversely, his input was invaluable in defining the Christological orthodoxy as promulgated by the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451). It was through his efforts that the language of the radical union of natures found in the *Twelve Anathemas* of Cyril of Alexandria, which had been accepted at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431, was rescinded. Through his efforts the Antiochenes escaped a near disaster at Ephesus. Had Theodoret not effectively exposed the inadequacies of the Christological narrative of the Cyrilline party at the consultation held in Chalcedon in the late summer of AD 431, the Emperor’s endorsement of the Council of Ephesus might have contained an outright accusation of heresy and condemnation of the Orientals. His efforts in composing the *Tomos of Reunion* in AD 433 greatly contributed to restoring the theological reputation of the Orientals. Through Cyril’s endorsement of the *Tomos of Reunion*, the sweeping victory of Cyrilline party at Ephesus (AD 431) was effectively reduced to a mere political victory, while the Orientals finally triumphed in the theological sense. Theodoret kept up this momentum in repairing the image of the Antiochenes by holding his ground against Cyril’s attacks on the highest authorities in his tradition, Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, while patiently awaiting the right moment for a counteroffensive. This strategy paid off well after the death of Cyril of Alexandria, when Theodoret waged the next stage of his grand plan by attacking the theological inadequacy of the Ephesine party in the *Eranistes*. This initiated a series of events, from the condemnation of the Ephesine party in the person of Eutyches at the Resident Synod of AD 448 through the debacle of the Robber Council in AD 449 to the convocation of the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451 at which Theodoret

was received as orthodox and exonerated of charges of heresy. Moreover, all Theodoret's major Christological concepts and ideas were included in the definition of faith published by the Council of Chalcedon. The fact that this definition remains the point of reference and synonym for Christological orthodoxy testifies to the finality of the restitution of the prestige of the Antiochene party at Chalcedon, a restitution initiated and made possible by the theological genius of Theodoret of Cyrrhus. Therefore, the time is ripe to revisit the history of Christological controversy of the fifth century and to restore Theodoret of Cyrrhus to his rightful place alongside and in equal glory with Cyril of Alexandria.

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